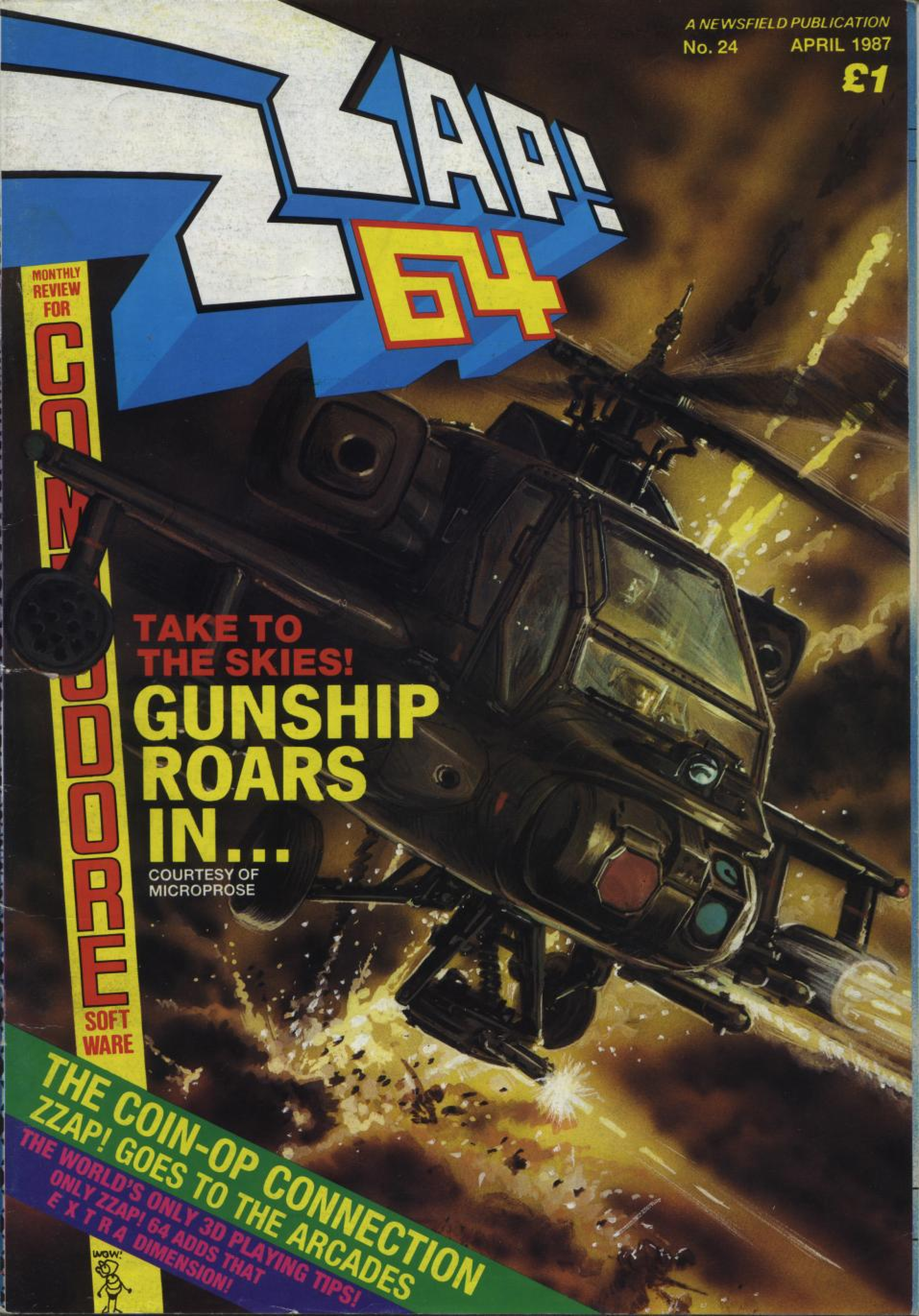


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No. 24 APRIL 1987
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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE
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ISSUE 24 APRIL 1987

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Advertising Information & Bookings
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Printed in England by Carlisle Web Offset (Member of the BPCC Group), Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria. Colour Origination by Scan Studios, Wallace Road, London N1

Distributed by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE

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'Tracker could top the addiction charts... 10 out of 10 for sheer playability... terrific value for money'
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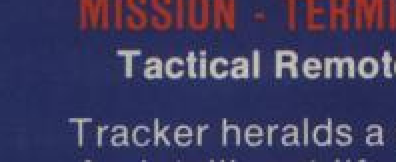
'Controlling several craft at once will put your mind into warp mode'
Computer Gamer

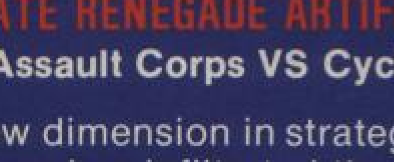
'Presentation is excellent'
Commodore User

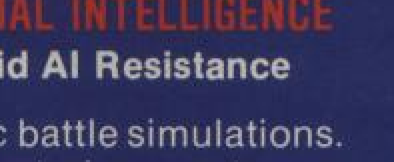
MISSION - TERMINATE RENEGADE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

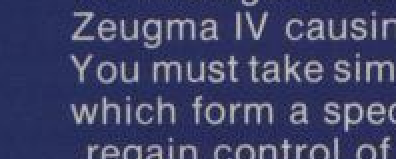
Tactical Remote Assault Corps VS Cycloid AI Resistance

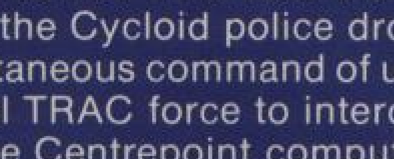
Tracker heralds a new dimension in strategic battle simulations. An intelligent life force has infiltrated the central computer on Zeugma IV causing the Cycloid police droids to run renegade. You must take simultaneous command of up to eight TRAC units which form a special TRAC force to intercept the Cycloids and regain control of the Centrepoint computer. Its fast pace and devious strategic challenges make Tracker the ultimate in artificially intelligent strategy games.

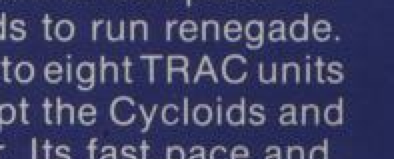

Cycloids swarm the Centrepoint complex to attack your Skimmer TRAC Squad


A glance at the long range scanner shows four Cycloids homing in on your Skimmers


Attack! Attack! A Cycloid rounds a bend. Blast it before it wipes you out


Don't shoot this one! A Skimmer exits the node that you're about to enter


Back to the scanner, to work out the location of the nearest communication centre


Drop a timebomb in the communication centre and get out before it explodes!

Screenshots taken from Commodore 64 version

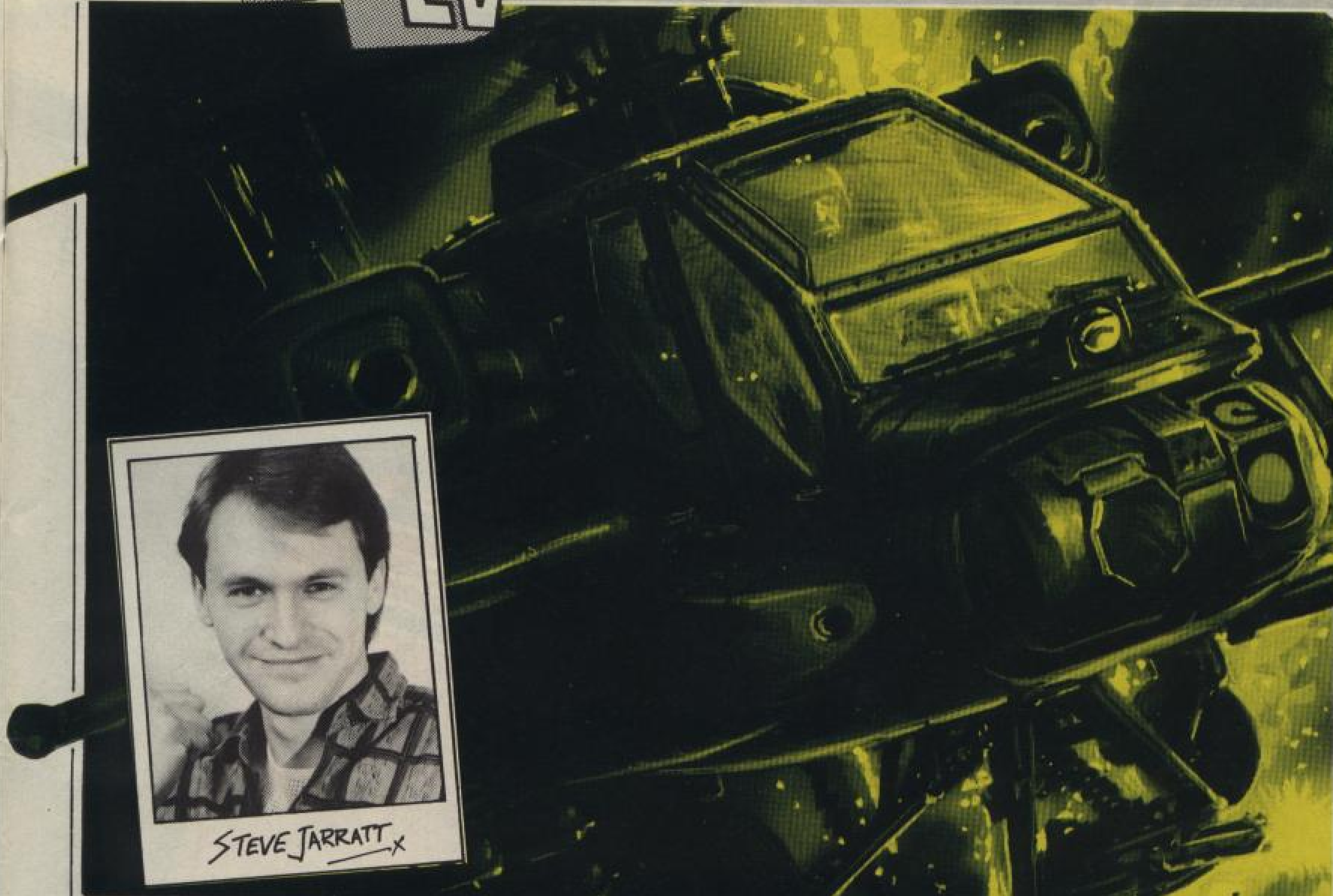
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ZZAP! ED



DIG THE NEW BREED . . .

I'm not usually full of joy this late in the schedule, but I'm always willing to make an exception . . . so will you join me in welcoming two new members to our ranks . . .

First, we have Steve Jarratt ("I used to be an industrial chemist, y' know") – a 24 year old from Tividale, just outside Birmingham ("I'm not a Brummie"). Steve is working on ZZAP! as of this issue, providing reviews and comments ("Yep, I've got a degree in chemistry"). And just for more inquisitive among you . . . his interests include driving very fast ("but not illegally – honest") in his Fiesta XR2, and science fiction films and books ("my girlfriend's called Claire, by the way – and she's absolutely gorgeous"). He also paints – mostly fantasy pictures, and occasionally takes photographs. He adores ten-pin bowling ("*Tenth Frame*'s dead good"), and listens to Peter Gabriel, Talking Heads, and Simple Minds ("well, I did listen to Queen a few years back, but I'm much better now"). Steve's favourite films are Blade Runner, Close Encounters and Aliens, and his all-time favourite computer program is *Mercenary*, closely followed by *The Sentinel* ("I used to play *Elite* a fair bit") and *Jack Attack*. Arcade-wise, Steve enjoys Hang On, Mr Do's Castle and Xevious ("the conversion was appalling"). He dislikes very little (he's such a chummy Brummie – "For the last time, I'm not a Brummie").

Coming soon to save the day for ZZAP! Strategy fans is Phillipa Irving, hot from pages of our sister magazine CRASH. Currently studying for her history degree beneath the lofty spires of Oxford, our own University Challenge will begin as soon as she receives her 64 and disk drive. Not content with filling the late (well he always was) Mr Masterson's shoes, Phillipa will also be helping the White Wiz by providing a valued second opinion from time to time. Thriving on debate and controversy, Ms Irving will be only too glad to indulge in correspondence with any or all of our many adventure fans. Welcome aboard Phillipa, and the best of luck.

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

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ZZAP! RRAP

My arms are creaking, my legs groaning and my back shrieking – it's that time of year, you see – early planting time. The earth's still frozen solid though, hence the complaining extremities; playing *The Sentinel* for eight days on the trot doesn't prepare you for gentle exertions like turning the sod.

So, after a long weekend in the cottage jungle, it was a refreshing change to cycle down the hill and delve into some more of your letters. Letter of the Month this month isn't right at the start, because I thought, after last month's mammoth '*Gauntlet* is bugged' binge, that it would only be fair to let the other side offer their point of view. We received this letter from some mysterious sub-set of US Gold, who call themselves 'The Gauntleteers' . . .

US rAave

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear ZZAP!
I'm now going to try and sort out this ZZAP! vs *Commodore User* issue once and for all.

First of all I'd better say that although I live in the United States, I still get ZZAP! and the odd *Commodore User* fairly often. And I am disgusted with the number of letters slagging off ZZAP! that appear in *Commodore User*. For instance the latest copy had a total of about 13 letters (compared to around 30 in the ZZAP! Christmas Issue) of which at least six attacked ZZAP! and the most annoying part was that none of the letters had reasons to back up the 'slaggin off'.

Referring to the December 86 issue of ZZAP! We have a writer called Anonymous who decides to give ratings on various elements of the two magazines. Let's try and get a 'real' evaluation of these ratings.

First, we're given PRESENTATION in which ZZAP! gets the best by three percent. Listen, Anon, why can't you accept that in ZZAP! there's far more colour, more letters, in-depth and abstract articles (such as the Musician's Ball), which knocks spots off the competition, and a much better layout balance of reviews, articles and letters. Shouldn't the scores here be 97% to ZZAP! and 79% to *Commodore User*?

Next we have reviews – come on Anon, can't you see that ZZAP! has the most thorough and complete reviews in the computer industry – here again we see ZZAP! with more colour screen shots and more humorous and in-depth criticisms. ZZAP! 99% to *Commodore User*'s 90%.

Hints and tips do vary from month to month, but overall ZZAP! has an average six or seven pages of the above, whereas *Commodore User* has only four pages (on average). Yet again, there's more colour and more screen-shots appearing in this section of ZZAP! than in *Commodore User*. ZZAP! again dominating with a 95% to 90% score.

Okay, here's one of *Commodore User*'s strong points – Previews. It does, quite often, have a lot of previews, but also tends to take previews a bit too far, and decides to review them! ZZAP! also has Preview articles fairly regularly. On the whole there are unbiased opinions given by both magazines. *Commodore User* gets a big 95% here which beats ZZAP! by 4% (91% for those who can't subtract).

What's next, ah. Adventure columns. *Commodore User* does have a rather extensive column, but it doesn't seem to have the atmosphere of the ZZAP! column. I'll leave my rating out here because I'm not an adventurer.

One of the most important columns this – News – and here we have *Commodore User* with four pages (average) of news (about half screen shots in colour as well) against ZZAP!'s four pages (sometimes more, sometimes less) which contain a lot more detail than the *Commodore User* column. Close decision this but I think ZZAP! does get the edge with 94% against 92%.

Value is probably the most important factor in buying magazines. ZZAP! wins this section by 7% with a score of 97%. First of all ZZAP! has more reviews, more colour pages, better letters pages, a better news column, and has a better presentation rating than *Commodore User*. Also ZZAP! seems to have (an average, again!) an extra 30-page advantage, of which about three-quarters is editorial.

The overall rating will be left to you – just take my opnions and see whether you agree with them. And remember, everyone has their own opinions but they only mean something if they can back them up with justifiable arguments.

One last note: Anon, says ZZAP! is sometimes childish, but doesn't anyone have the freedom to escape reality for a few pages? Also what sort of childish behaviour is it to print a screen-shot as part of a review with profanity easily visible in it?

I've spoken my opinion, now let's here yours.
Mark Jones, 1618 Wesleyan Bowman Road, Macon, Georgia, 31210, USA.

I'm simply breathless, Mark. Such detail! It's nice to know that ZZAP! has such strong support from the other side of the Atlantic, and thanks for your comments. I'm staying well out of any arguments relating to this issue (I know the power of Eugene's roundhouse – who's Eugene?), and with all due respect to your letter, Mark, I'd suggest we leave the magazines to get on with the business of being magazines and let Lloyd Honeyghan (no relation) get on with the slugging!

I know I'll get it in the neck from just about everyone, but I thought yours was the letter most deserving of the software prize this month (costs a fortune sending stuff to the States no doubt)! And there'll be cries of bias, I know. But a bit of flag-waving now and then doesn't do any harm. So there it is, Mark. Make your choice and let Carol know.

LM

TOO HARD

Dear Lloyd,
I have two computer mad boys of five and eight who can't wait for your magazine to be published each month. Each issue receives so much attention that it invariably falls to pieces. But they are always disappointed by the competitions which are far too hard. Please could you consider a special competition for your younger readers occasionally.
Liz Best, Tadley, Nr Basingstoke, Hants

It's a bit difficult catering for everyone, Liz, and surveys show that your two boys are well ahead of their time to be so enjoying ZZAP! The average readership age is 17 or so, and certainly the biggest single age group is 14 to 15-year-olds. But I'll pass your request on to hewhodecides (the mighty Penn).

LM

PEN PALS

Dear Lloyd,
I would really like a pen pal. My name is Paul, and I am ten. I would like someone my age (no older than 12) to write to. I don't care where you come from (as long as you can read and write English) and I don't care if you're a boy or a girl. I live at **7 Southpark Avenue, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland**

Dear Lloyd,
I would like a pen pal who knows a lot about the Commodore 64. I am a boy of 12. Would you print this so that someone who might like to be my pen pal will know where I live. My address is **1 Chatham House, Mc Neil Road, London SE5 8PN**. By the way my name is **Calvin Kent**.

ZZAP! RRAP

TREASON ON THE HIGH SEAS

Piracy of software is an enduring subject, and the response to publishing a letter from someone calling himself 'The Proud Pirate' in issue 22, has been considerable.

S Fenton *from Stanley, Stoke-on-Trent is not very amused when he snaps . . .*

If he's so proud, how come he hasn't put his name at the bottom of his letter? Coward.

I agree – at least the pirates of the Spanish Main rogered their jollies from the masthead with pride. **S Fenton** *is also annoyed that 'The Proud Pirate' presumed to be writing for ALL school kids . . .*

I'm 15, have had a C64 for three years and have never copied a game for it yet. Nor will I because I wonder if our pirate has considered that his practice is not, and I quote, 'to save money and cut corners', but is actually stealing the cost of the game from the manufacturers?

It is stealing, of course, and whatever the excuse, the nature of the act isn't changed. But apparently, you're a voice crying in the wilderness of the school playground, Mr Fenton. **Russell Wallace** *from Dunlaoghaire, Co Dublin, knows . . .*

. . . the magazine has to officially condemn piracy, but think of the situation for those of us who aren't paid for playing games all day. Most people can only afford, at most, one game a month. The February 87 issue had over 50 pages of reviews. I wouldn't bother getting the magazine if I knew that 49 pages would be totally irrelevant to me. Similarly the high-score chart would be meaningless except that I have pirate copies of 11 of the games on it. (I would have 12, but I deleted my copy of *Infiltrator* and re-used the disk because the game was incredibly boring).

I like that subtle threat, Russell, about not buying ZZAP!. **S Fenton** *doesn't agree that lack of money affords a proper motive for stealing, and addresses TPP again . . .*

Maybe Mr Trott *can* afford £10 - £15 games on a steady salary working in a computer shop, but that doesn't stop you from working! You've probably never done 10 minutes of honest graft in your life. And that pathetic excuse of not being able to work for more than two hours a day is rot. Two hours a day in a proper working establishment, maybe, but that doesn't stop you from working at home like everyone else. All in all I think you well deserved Lloyd's verbal 'bolting' – one of your favourite words, I believe pirate.

Now there's a shot across the bow! But game pricing is obviously foremost in people's minds, especially if they live outside the UK. **Gary Tobin** *from Dublin, Eire reckons that . . .*

The only price which seems to appear in a software house's vocabularly is £9.99, a price which can mean anything up to £13.99 in the Irish Republic. The so called budget games are mostly, excluding a few such as *Thrust* etc, games unfit to be sold at any price.

The price range can be even worse in Scandanavia, and as **Paper Bud** *of the so-called ZAP Cracking Company claims . . .*

In Norway, you have to pay about 190 kr (£18) for one single game on cassette! As you understand, this kills the honesty of most gamers.

. . . and there it is again, high prices making honest men of thieves. But other justifications are offered. **Paper Bud** *again . . .*

The most stupid thing to do is to ban the pirates, since we are a great par to the Commodore world. And I know for sure that I, and many with me, would never have owned a computer today if we weren't able to copy games from one another.

I must say, that I can't quite see that one, Paper, it's a pretty thin excuse. To become 'a great par' I suppose you pirated your incredibly expensive computer in the first place? **Gary Tobin** *offers a justification that's quite new to me. In his opinion . . .*

. . . the reason why people buy pirated games is that firstly, such titles are genuine ones. This may seem ironic, but computer games sold in shops are, in many cases, much more false than reproductions sold by 'pirates'.

Really, Gary, how so?

Many original games, as stated in your magazines, hide behind an official licence, the game itself not even being worthy to be called a computer program due to its lack of graphics, sound, gameplay or effort on the part of the programmer. Other games, sold by software houses, many of whom one would think to be reputable and honest, are very, very poor imitations of an original, in the hope (in both cases) of trapping the unwary.

But isn't that confusing the issue a little? Now you're talking about 'buying' pirated games – presumably commercially stolen games?

Many of my computer-linked associates, I believe, buy pirated games, and in fact there is scarcely one, I have heard, who does not own a game of dubious origin.

Got it Gary, you don't indulge in piracy (illegal home copying), but you approve of professional thieves doing it for you so you can buy games cheaply?

I do not condone their actions, but I do feel that it's almost impossible to condmen them, given that they do sell, I hear at a very reasonable price, and in my opinion are much less dishonest then many of the software houses.

I see – along the Marxist line that all ownership is theft; so it's copyright holders that are the thieves, and the people who rob them for personal gain who are the honest men? I like that, I must try it out on Newsfield . . .

Paper Bud, *however, is far more materialist in his attitude, and appears to have constructed a theory that supports his right to be a . . .*

. . . so-called pirate. But as a matter of fact, I don't feel like an outlaw. You say it's illegal to copy games, but is it really? I've seen so many versions of what is legal and illegal, that I can't count them. Sometimes, it's legal to make back-up copies of your own games. Then sometimes it's legal to copy if you just copy from an original disk or cassette. Then again, sometimes no copying is allowed under any circumstances. And it goes on and on like that.

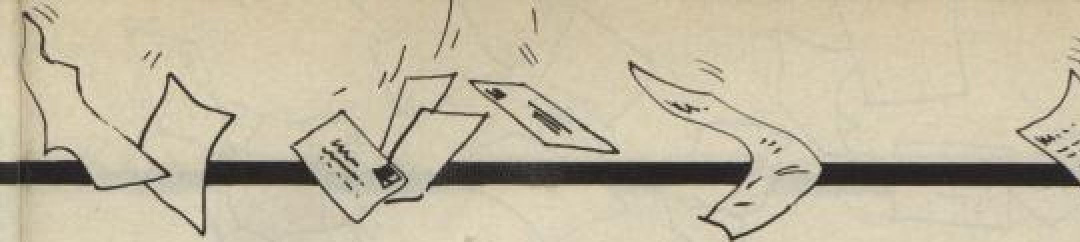
Yes indeed! Once again, it isn't the pirate who's to blame, but society for confusing him and making him that way. At least **Russell Wallace** *is more honest about his motives when he says . . .*

John Trott's description of piracy as a network of juvenile delinquents making profits from other people's work is wrong. I don't know anybody who charges friends for copies of software. And if a friend asked you for a copy of a game would you really tell him to go and buy it? I don't think so.

No, I have to confess, I would lend it to him – but that isn't the same as saying, 'go forth and multiply'. It's a sad state of affairs if lending is synonymous with approval to steal. Nevertheless, most software houses have, like the music industry before them, come to terms with unorganised home copying. They don't condone it, but they know they can't prevent it either. What they can do is try to limit the harm this type of piracy does to the industry in general and attempt to break up any serious copying rings.

Back-up utilities haven't made things any easier for them, but to those who would suggest banning them **Russell Wallace** *has this to say . . .*

The ideas of Trevor and Nadium for limiting sales of copying utilities wouldn't work. I have three including *Fast Hack'Em* and guess how I got



them? Yep, even if one won't copy itself some hacker will modify it so two can be used each to copy the other.

The pirate pirated so to speak.

From what everyone says, the matter of piracy seems to rest on the perceived value of software; and there, everyone has their own idea of what a game should cost. **Gary Tobin** *thinks Britain's software should be sold under the authority of a special body . . .*

The British travel industry is overseen by ABTA, the multi-nationals are kept in check by the Monopolies commision, so why, in the name of all things holy, can't there be such a body in the Software industry?

How would it work though?

An independent body, while not reviewing a game, would view it, taking into account, time, effort and resources applied to it – and then fix a price. Whatever you may say, in my opinion it is quite easy to judge which games are made to trap the public and which games are made for the public to enjoy. If something such as this happened, while not erradicating piracy, the average micro user, would see piracy for what it is. Until the software companies clean up their own act, I for one can not fully condemn pirates.

That opens up many cans of worms; who will judge the judges? being the least of it. Price fixing is largely regarded as stifling to commerce and eventually unfair to the public. But I'll throw that thorny debating point wide open. Any takers out there for the idea?

Thank you to those taking part in the debate. I must say I really enjoy putting these multiple-opinion jobs together!

LM

WARRANTY IS OUR WORD

Dear Sir

I would like to reply to Mr Scott Murray's letter on page 11.

I enclose copies of our autumn leaflet for yourself. I thank you for the magazine's fair comment regarding the leaflet, as it had not been seen.

As you can see the 'two for one' warranty replacement is located in the Medialife column and, I hope, clearly refers as intended to the Media Life branded boxed product (launched at PCW).

I understand Mr Murray's feelings and I take his views seriously. I was very concerned when he told me of his problem with the disks. I asked him to return the leaflet in question, as we had never given such a warranty on bulk disks. He sent me his copy of the enclosed leaftlet together with the faulty disks. They were replaced on that standard one for one basis with a personal note explaining why. No acknowledgement was received from Mr Murray.

Our warranty is not made lightly, neither do we vary the terms; returned disks are replaced without question. The volumes we sell (half-a-million in six months) means there are always some incompatible disks, and a small number of failures. We don't hide from it, and sincerely apologise for the inconvenience it can cause.

Finally may I repeat my apologies on behalf of DDS-UK. Obviously Mr Murray was inconvenienced and something was amiss. DDS-UK haven't tried to avoid a warranty claim, but there has been a genuine misunderstanding. By the way, the returned disks were tested on our own computer, and they worked as certified. Perhaps not much consolation for Mr Murray, but we did try to find a reason.

Give us another try Mr Murray, we don't often get it wrong, and we do value your business! We really do try to ensure the best service and product for our customers, after all we need them!

Richard Mortimore, Managing Director, DDS-UK, 129 High Street, Hampton Hill, Middlesex TW12 1NJ

Hmmm, having glanced through the leaflet Richard's sent in, Scott, I have to tell you that I agree with him, and you seem to have misunderstood the warranty.

LM

ZZAP! RRAP

GLOVES OFF . . .

Dear ZZAP!
Thanks for your kind review of *Gauntlet* on the C64. We read with interest the letters you published concerning *Gauntlet* in your March issue and feel that some points need clarifying.

Firstly, and most important, *Gauntlet* arcade fanatics will know that some levels said 'Players may now go off screen'. This feature was incorporated on the Commodore only and was implemented on most levels. If a player does go off screen, he must re-trace his steps to re-appear in the playfield, or find an exit, perhaps by waiting until the walls turn into exits. This feature has not proved popular and has been turned off in the latest version.

Tape users should note that *Gauntlet* loads a block of ten levels from which it chooses four for you to play. When the tape reaches the end, rewind it and press play. The game will continue and you will probably encounter new mazes. The game has **not** crashed.

Extra shot speed proved unreliable on the Commodore because the full-colour scroll took so much processing time. We decided that colour was more important than shot speed.

As for poisoned food, look at the handle of the jug. We invented poisoned food which has now appeared in *Gauntlet II* in a slightly different form. Anyway, it's supposed to be hard to tell the difference! Slow down and look before you leap. Poisoned food will take 100 health points, one special ability and/or one potion off you. This works.

One of your readers claimed that characters swapped abilities. This is news to us! There is no way that characters could swap abilities. We think he must have gained special abilities from special potions or lost them by eating poisoned food. The same person writes that 'potions randomly disappear'. Potions on screen can be shot by demons, lobbers or the player. Potions held by the character can be lost by eating poisoned food. As for his other comment, the treasure room bonus is added to your score as you enter the next level.

Finally thanks for all of your entries to our competition. Some of them were terrific. Please feel free to write to us, **The Gauntlet Programmers, US Gold, Units 2 and 3, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX**. We are pleased with *Gauntlet* and are always interested in constructive criticism.
The Gauntleteers

Thanks for the info, Gaunt (may I call you 'Gaunt')? I trust it clears up points for some readers, although as is the way with these things, no doubt there will still be doubting Thomases around with further queries or complaints. As the gentlemen say – feel free to write to them.

Another company also responded to a reader's comments; Scott Murray complained about the wording of a warranty in a leaflet from Direct Disk Supplies Limited. The managing director writes . . .

LM

PLEASE BY MAIL

Dear Lloyd,
I have just read an interesting bit of news in *Adventurer* Issue Seven. It seems that Newsfield Publications are considering running a PBM game.

Is this true? Will it run in all the magazines or independently? Will it be SF or fantasy-based? How much will it cost?

I sincerely hope that this idea gets off the the ground as I am sure that the many CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and LM readers will enjoy playing a PBM game as I did in *Personal Computer Games* with their 'Final Conflict' (are all you Union members still out there?)
Paul Booth, Leyland, Lancs

It's true that Newsfield has been considering a PBM game for some time, although plans aren't quite as firm as the news item you mention might have suggested. Certainly CRASH readers seem to have been taking to Brendan Kavanagh's PBM page very well. I wonder what ZZAP! readers think of the idea. Let me know.

LM

A RRAPPER RRAPS . . . RRAPS . . . A RRAPPER RRAPS . . . A RRAPPER A RRAPPER RRAPS . . . A RRAPPER A RRAPPER RRAPS . . . RRAPS . . .

Dear Lloyd Mangram,
Having been an avid reader since Issue 1 I have written a little poem (Rrap) about ZZAP!, and it goes like this:

ZZAP! 64 is for me
Better than sitting home watching TV
Better than a long walk in the park
Better than listening to my dog bark
Better than going for a swim
Better than going with my girlfriend, Kim
Better than riding on my bike
Better than playing with my mate Mike
So ZZAP! is the best without a doubt
That's what my Rrap's all about

Good luck in 87.
David Taylor, Alvington, Glos

It's things like your letter
that make me feel better
no matter how much wetter
the day may be.
Is your dog a Red Setter?

LM

'THINGIE...'

LICENSED TO KILL

Dear Lloyd,
I'm sick to death with the attitude of the major software houses. They pay huge sums to get an 'exclusive' licence to convert a game from the arcades, often one that nobody's ever seen or played, then take months to produce an appalling end product!

I wholeheartedly agree with Julian Rignall in ZZAP! February when he said about *Breakthru* – 'Why bother spending a fortune on an official licence when you're going to turn out a heap of rubbish life this?'

And that's just one of many atrocious licences. In fact, besides *Gauntlet*, the only good games reviewed in that issue of ZZAP! were all originals without the hint of a 'big name'! There must be people running companies like Ocean or Elite who NEVER see the final games; why would they release junk like *Cobra* or *Highlander* otherwise? And have the nerve to charge a tenner too. Have the big companies forgotten the essential elements of a game, such as basic playability?

My second gripe is with the growing number of monotonous clones on the market. If I see another ninja beat 'em up I'll go crazy! It all started with *Way of the Exploding Fist* and from then we've seen nothing but replicas, with subtle differences, on every aspect of martial arts.

Now there's a new style for everyone to copy – *Gauntlet*. I can assure you we haven't seen the last game in that maze-of-monsters style yet! In a year we'll all be sick of those too. Why can't software houses produce any original games any more? These are always the favourites with the public, can't they see that? Why can't we have more games like *The Sentinel*? No hype, no big name, no double page adverts, just a brilliant game.

Next I want to ask all the wallies complaining about ZZAP! to go and read their phone book instead. So the Christmas issue didn't feature any stunning games up for review? But it was still an amazing read, and a lot better than certain 'other' mags which fell back on 'exclusives' that were rush-reviewed . . . but there does seem to be a deluge of poor software out at the moment – because of all the licences, perhaps? I've never seen so many pictures of a disgusted Rignall in ZZAP!

As to the idiots who write about ZZAP! falling apart, and demand that better binding be used – rubbish! Out of all the magazines I have, only ONE has ever separated from the cover. If readers simply avoided throwing their issues around, and force-folding them, they would have no problems. The staples are fine. They must be if both my Christmas ZZAP!s from the last two years are still intact despite each having quite a lot of pages. What would readers prefer, a thinner magazine?

Christopher Hester, Ardglass, Co Down, N Ireland

I don't think anyone would disagree with your sentiments about the quality (or quantity) of licensed arcade games at the moment, Christopher. It seems to me as though there's a slump in original thinking. But I have to defend software houses against your suggestion that they spend 'huge sums' and 'take months' specifically to produce 'an appalling end product'. No-one does that, because it's silly. They may take months, and the end product may be appalling IN SPITE of months of loving care and attention taken over the program.

To me, the biggest problem appears to lie in the large in-house programming teams so popular at the moment. Once, having several, salaried programmers was taken as a sign of commitment to the product – it indicated Serious Programming, as distinct from the 'back bedroom' software house style prevalent four years ago. And arguably, a collection of games designers in concert should add up to more than the sum of their individual efforts; certainly program control, production and polish should be better and more efficiently handled. A software house feels safer if it knows the source of its games are firmly in hand (and on the premises).

But while this seemed to work, say, 18 months ago, the effects of being part of an institution are possibly beginning to be deleterious to originality and imagination. I say this, because so many successful programmers are, by nature, loners. Perhaps by putting several together in an office 'cage', their spirit is being stifled.

And there is the side-effect caused by having an in-house team – unless they're always working, they're very expensive, so rather than asking them to come up with original ideas, you make them do the licensed conversions while relying on maverick outsiders to sell you something original now and again.

That's my opinion. I would be interested to hear from programmers working in large in-house teams to put their point of view.

LM

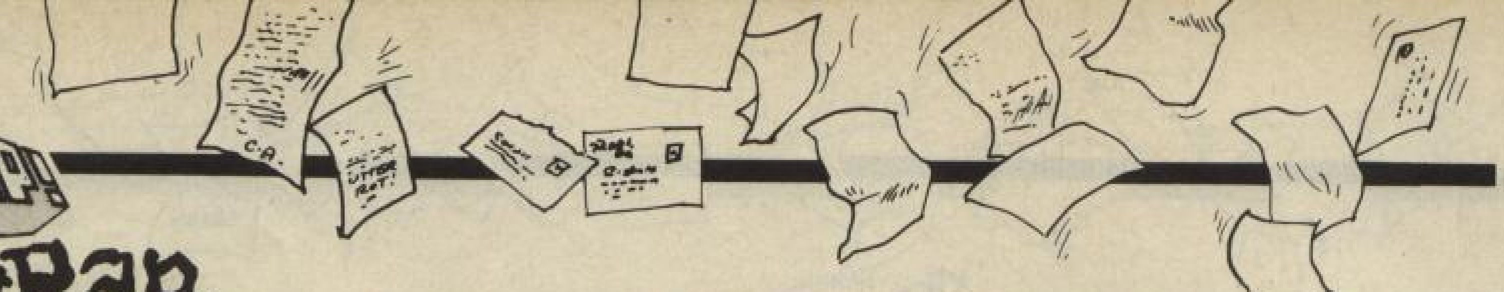
WHERE ARE YOU?

Dear ZZAP!
Please could you send me the address of Mastertronic because my *Human Race* tape no longer loads. I sent it to the Company I bought it from but it was returned with 'Gone Away' stamped on it.

LM, Pilsley, Chesterfield, Derbys

Not another LM?! As for Mastertronic's address . . . can you help, guys?

LM



ZZAP! RRAP

CHUCKED IN THE EGG

Dear ZZAP!
I am writing to you on my Dad's behalf, enquiring about the game *Chuckie Egg II*. So far he's mapped out the whole game, made the egg and the toy. BUT there are two problems:
1) He can't go above the railway track after going below it to make the toy.
2) He can't get the toy into the egg.
Please could you help?
J D Preov

PS I should be grateful if you would print this letter to perk my Dad up a bit. After playing *Chuckie Egg II* for about three months and not completing it, he just moans and does nothing. He's in a bad way.

I hope printing this will perk him up. Sounds to me like he's done quite well. Over to Jaz for some helpful hints perhaps, next month Jaz . . . ?

LM

A LOONY LEMONADER LAMBASTS

Dear ZZAP!
I am writing to you to ask what the hell is going on at the Towers lately. Are you all on the waccy baccy or the loony lemonade?

Your mag in the last two months has gone to the dogs.

The Christmas 'SPECIAL' was, to say the least, nothing special, and vastly overpriced. The reviews, when I could find them amongst the rubbish were very poor, I mean those egotistical balloons, Rignall, Sumner and Eddy, the ACE reviewers slagged *1942* something ridiculous. Next month the game comes straight into your charts at number 16. Just shows how much they know!

February: how could CLOTH EARS SUMNER describe Martin Galway's version of *It's a Kind of Magic* as reasonable. The cretin wouldn't know a great piece of music if it smacked him in the gob. (which someone should do quickly before his head swells any more)! This is, without doubt one of the best pieces of music I have heard on the 64, and I know a lot of people agree with me.

For someone who thinks the Art Of Noise is music (his musical taste must be in the rear of his underpants) to slag off anybody is a sick joke.

Just as sick as the *Highlander* game! *Gauntlet* (from US Gold) was bound to be given a Sizzler, by your (REVIEWERS?), I mean it's an old arcade game, (nothing new or original) yes it's good but not (93%) good.

Firelord another good maze game only gets 68%!! *Destroyer* the best warship simulation to date only 85%, *Tarzan* a meagre 50%, *Hypaball* 36%, *It's A Knock-out* 34% *Skyrunner* 58%, *Judge Dredd* (It is disappointing, but 13% was totally garbage), *Sigma 7* only 70% (very mean) *Paperboy* 44% (this is a joke surely), *Space Harrier* (45% utter crap, as you always like to say. *Terra Cresta* (56% too hard for the brainless wonders was it?) *Breakthru* (19% come on for gawd's sake), *Tenth Frame* (85% for the best sports simualtion in months), why don't you get some real reviewers, and not these swell-headed teaboys to review your games?

Let the people who matter most (JOE PUBLIC) review the games on offer. Run a monthly competition and send the winners a game to review, then you may get a realistic percentage for a game, and not some of the outrageous and totally false figures of two or three pea-brained pen-pushers.

The games I've mentioned, I have, and I thoroughly enjoy them all.

I hope this letter will not be treated like the last three letters I've written to you over the last five months. I notice that any time I write a letter to you with any criticism of ZZAP!, or the (STAFF?) IT NEVER GETS PUBLISHED. CAN'T YOU TAKE IT? EGO-MANIACS!

If you have the guts, answer!
Jack Diamond, Ayr, Scotland

What a totally stupid, klutzy idea! How the hell is JOE PUBLIC going to be able to review games every month? The logistics involved alone would prove within minutes that you haven't a clue how much effort is involved in that kind of organisation. And besides, all that would do, according to your own argument, would be to swap three pea-brained pen pushers (whose opinions on games in general you know, so you know how to judge their remarks in relation to a game) for a bunch of unknown and, quite possibly, equally pea-brained reviewers.

Oh no, Mr Diamond, I know what you're really saying – you're saying, 'let me review the games because I know better than people whose opinons differ from my own'.

As for not printing your earlier letters, I assure you the reason for not picking them out was nothing to do with your criticism of ZZAP!

LM

ABOUT FACE!

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing on several matters including piracy *see* TREASON ON THE HIGH SEAS *elsewhere in Rrap* – ***LM***), but first some points about ZZAP!

1) I thought the lack of reviews in the Christmas Special was more than made up for by the entertaining variety of articles.

2) Please! Please! Threaten Art with JR's politics or something, but do something about GP's face! (the picture in the reviews, I mean – put that hammer down, Lloyd).

3) Is it true that really your name is prefixed by 'Score'?

4) Do any of the team have any musical ability whatsoever?

5) Y'know those *Zoids* pokes? I can't get them to work. When I try firing, I get all sorts of things for bullets crosses, arrows and when the railgun sequence is over, the screen goes fuzzy! (Selecting jamming makes the picture flicker between normal and fuzz – bad for the eyes). Mind you I did win my copy of *Zoids* in a *C & VG* (gasp!) competition, that might have something to do with it!

6) Who was 'MV' in issue 22? (*Destroyer* review). I mean, another opinion is always valuable, but you might have warned us. Did Art chuck a fit? Does the mysterious 'MV' work for Crash? Amtix? LM? (phew what awkward punctuation!) Please answer.

Anyway keep up the good work. I like the new added touches in the mag and I think GP makes a great Editor. But it is you Lloyd, that maketh ZZAP! what it is – a veritable Churchill of the computer industry, grinding pathetic, wingeing morons into the proverbial with your stinging verbal lashes (good, that eh)?

Before I go please print the name 'David Nicholson' as he is jealous 'cos I got my name printed in issue 20 (*Zoids* tips).
S Fenton, Stanley, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffs
PS Who's Eugene?

Quite! Who is Eugene? I've no idea. It's that Gary Penn inventing names again no doubt. I mean, who on earth would want a name like Eugene? (Sorry Eugene, I didn't mean it).

Referring to your 'piratic' comments: quite right S (what does the S stand for?), whatever the excuse, it's still stealing.

Now the hard part – the answers:

***2)** As you can see, Oli's redrawn the faces, and not before time; when this lot started they were fresh, bright-eyed teenage reviewers – you should see them on a Monday morning now . . .*

***3)** What, you mean as in 'Score Lloyd'? . . . Actually, I'm probably more scarred than scored.*

***4)** None whatever.*

***5)** I don't think there have been many complaints from anyone else, so maybe your answer's the correct one? . . .*

***6)** MV was Massimo Valducci (remember him?). No? Ah well – Gary apologises for not mentioning the fact . . .*

I was almost christened 'Winston' you know – wouldn't have had the same ring somehow, would it?

LM

NOT A NICE SNAKE

Dear Lloyd,
I have only just got a C64, but I've been buying ZZAP! since the November issue. I think it's brill, and I'm thinking of subscribing.

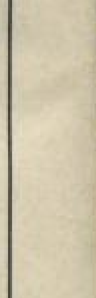
BUT, I must complain about the review of *Cobra* in your February issue. For presentation, the 'simple title screen', as you called it, is great.

28% for Graphics is pathetic; it should be in the seventies at least. The animateion isn't wonderful, but the backdrops are great. The sound is brill too, and deserves at least 85%. The Ocean loading music is BRILLiant and the tune on the game is very good. Hookability and lastability deserve 75% and 85% at least. Value deserves at least 80% and your 7% is unfair.

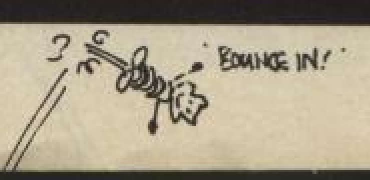
Overall I would give it about 85%. All I can say is they must not have played the game long enough. If they had, they might have found it as enjoyable as I do.
Jason Morton, Mexborough, S Yorks

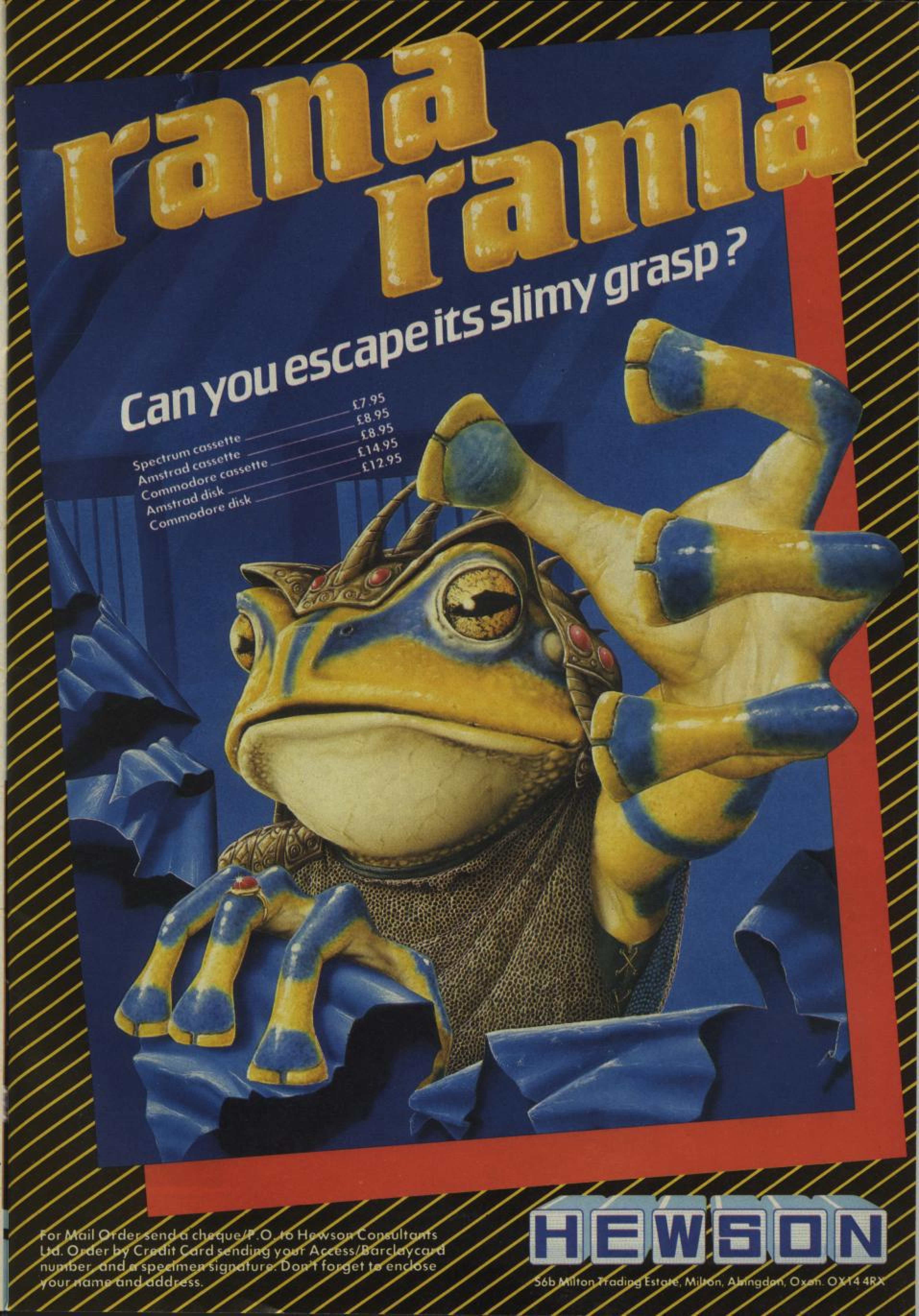
I thought they were a touch harsh, too, Jason, but I wouldn't go anything like as far up the scale you do. However, each to his own taste.

LM



That's it for this Issue. Thank you for all your letters. As you know, ZZAP! RRAP is for any subject under the sun (it doesn't have to relate to computer games, although that's helpful)! If any of the points raised by other readers' letters spark you off, well let fly. The address is, LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.




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ZZAP! TEST

GUNSHIP

Microprose, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk, joystick and keys

● A state of the art helicopter/combat simulation

NB: DISK VERSION REVIEWED

The Hughes AH-64A Apache is reputedly the most sophisticated helicopter gunship in the world – lasers, cameras, an infra-red night viewing system, radar sensors and jammers, computer guidance and targetting systems, and a complement of missiles and machine guns back up this claim. *Gunship* gives the player the opportunity to fly one of these multi-million dollar machines over five scenarios, ranging from a series of training missions, through three increasingly hostile combat situations to an out-and-out East/West confrontation in Europe.

Prior to take-off, the simulation parameters are defined. The pilot inputs his or her name (the program automatically defaults to the name of the last pilot), chooses a



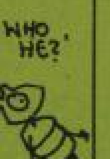
△ 'Your performance during training was superior. You receive the National Defense Service Medal.'





△ The TADS locks onto an enemy bunker and the pilot flies in, ready to fire off a series of Hellfire armour-piercing missiles





Gunship represents the state of the art in flight and combat simulators. It is highly impressive in both documentation and programming. The vector graphic landscape runs very quickly, considering the amount of features being moved around, which helps to give an authentic feeling of flying. This, combined with the brilliant combat scenes, makes for a very realistic and exciting piece of software. In all cases the information and option screens are beautifully rendered and are easily accessed using the joystick. The choice of options is huge, which should go a long way towards holding your interest. Overall, this is a tremendous simulator which represents a fair return for your cash – even at the price. I have no reservations in recommending the disk version of Gunship. Unfortunately, the cassette version takes an unreasonably long time to load and does not include as many options as the disk version. This seriously flaws an otherwise excellent program – try before you buy.



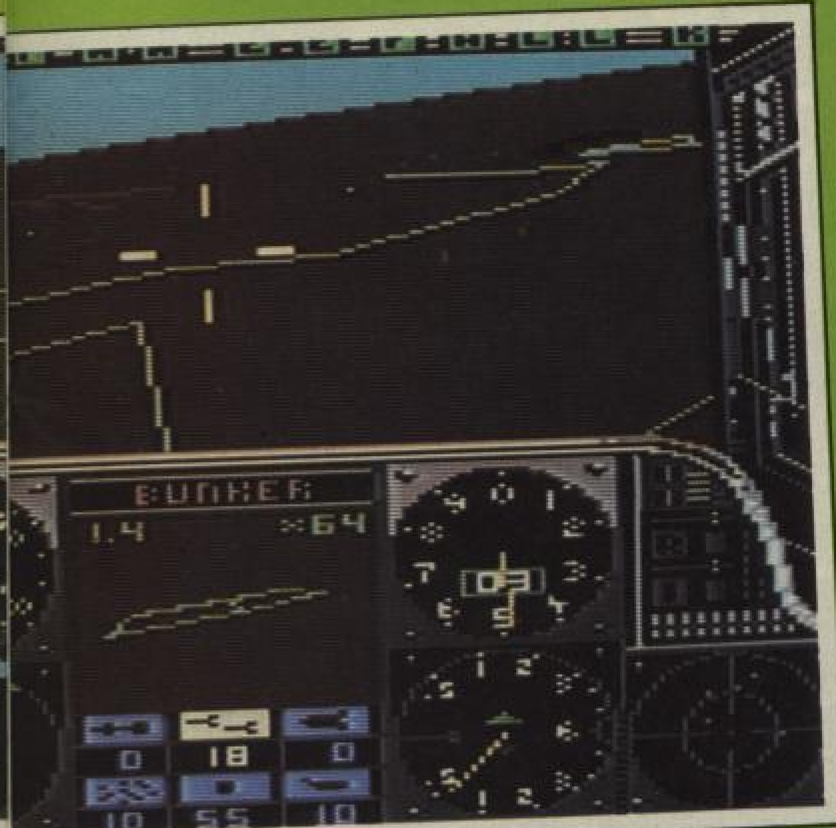


scenario (from training to war), the style of flight and the reality level. There are three flying styles, representing the difficulty of the opposition, and four reality settings: simplified or realistic flying and landing, variable or clear weather and the quality of the enemy's armament. Following this is a briefing session, which gives mission details and an intelligence report detailing military forces and equipment in the area.

The program automatically defaults to a standard weapons system for the chosen mission, but the array of weaponry can be adjusted to suit the pilot's preference. The mission begins when the helicopter is fully equipped.

A 3D first-person view of the helicopter's cockpit is then displayed, as seen through the pilot's IHADSS (Integrated Helmet And Display Sighting Sub-system). The outside world is viewed through the armoured helicopter window, and essential flight instrumentation is displayed beneath – for example: speed, altimeter, VSI and artificial horizon. As well as regular flight controls there are two combat features – the CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) and Threat Display (radar).

The CRT has three modes of operation: a TADS (Target Acquisition and Designation System) – used in conjunction with the pilot's IHADSS helmet, a Map, and a Display of incoming messages. On locating a target, a gun-sight is overlaid onto the helmet visor and the CRT displays a zoom-camera view on which TADS is locked, allowing the pilot to identify the target. The Apache's cannons, Sidewinder and Hellfire missiles are linked to the TADS system and automatically fly towards the selected target. However, the 2.75" rockets aren't, and the cross-hairs in the centre of the screen have to be lined up with the gun-sight if the rockets are to strike the target. When there is no military activity in the area the CRT reverts to a scrolling map with the ▷



△ The Apache's armoury is all but depleted and fuel supplies are running dangerously low – but home is in sight

Yet another program under the dubious heading of a 'flight simulation.' But, like most flight simulations available, this isn't an accurate simulation of flight – it's more of a technical simulation of how to control a helicopter. Which is why it's slow, tedious, unrewarding, and not at all atmospheric. The vector graphics aren't remotely realistic, and only serve to dampen the atmosphere – and my enthusiasm – even further. To be fair though, for what it's worth, Gunship **does offer more than the run-of-the-mill flight simulator. At least the disk version does – the cassette version is a complete waste of time and effort.**



DISK

PRESENTATION 97%
The fabulous instruction manual (which provides enlightening and very interesting reading) and the excellent keyboard overlay compensate for the slow, but not overly irritating delays during 'set-up'.

GRAPHICS 91%
Convincing 3D graphics, and the cockpit display area works extremely well.

SOUND 64%
Functional sound effects which could have been better.

HOOKABILITY 94%
The useful options and training missions painlessly ease a potential pilot into the action.

LASTABILITY 97%
The five scenarios provide a wealth of missions and enjoyment which should keep a pilot happy for months.

VALUE 86%
Very expensive, but you get what you pay for.

OVERALL 94%
A superlative flight/combat simulation.

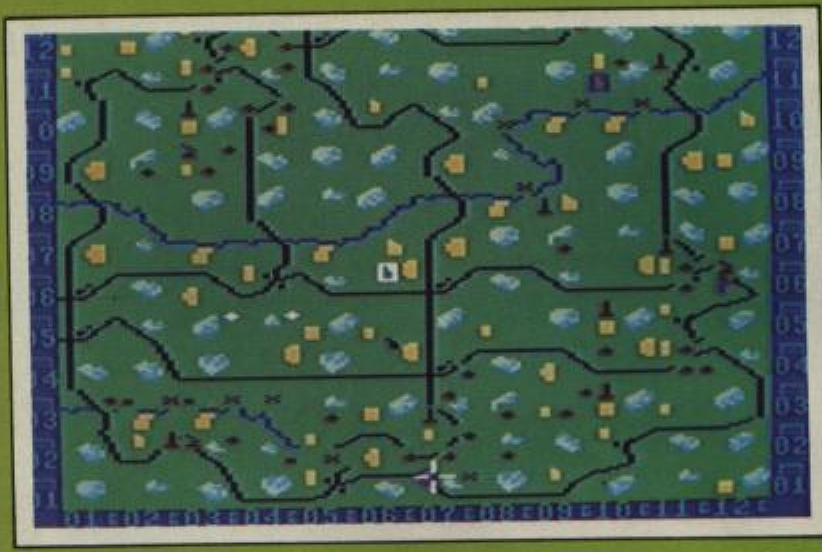


△ 'Your career as a pilot is over. Permanently. Your personal effects will be sent to your next of kin.'

ZZAP! TEST

GUNSHIP

The sheer depth of this simulation is incredible. There's a huge amount of detail which adds to the realism and only becomes apparent after the chopper has been flown. Little things . . . such as the way missiles disappear into the distance, taking several seconds before they hit their target – also, the targets within the CRT rotate as the chopper flies around it, making flight seem very realistic. The five scenarios are varied, and there are many missions within for a pilot to complete. The instruction manual is the best I've ever read for a computer program. Not only is it enlightening, it's also a very interesting read in its own right. Every aspect of the simulation is covered, and there's a wealth of information regarding flying tactics, military equipment (both allied and enemy), the Apache's avionics and the conditions and scenarios of the different missions. The in-game presentation is virtually faultless too. The controls are easy to understand, and the CRT and IHADSS work superbly. The save game option is a brilliant idea and allows the user to live a pilot's 'life', gradually improving skills and transferring from unit to unit until death or retirement bring it to a close. Gunship is immensely enjoyable, being exciting and rewarding to fly. As for the cassette version . . . well, Gunship was originally designed as a disk-only product comprising some 300k of data. Consequently the cassette version is on an extremely long-winded multi-load format and there are features missing from the original disk version. The program takes over *twenty minutes* to set up, and after completing a mission the cassette has to be rewound and another ten minutes of setting up endured if the pilot wants to fly another mission. There are no status displays during flight, and a pilot's record has to be loaded and saved manually onto another tape – failure to do so means the complete loss of all amassed data! Another difference is that the player can re-try any mission, even after a crash. If you want to buy the (rather expensive) cassette version, you should consider the drawback of the multi-load system – it's very frustrating.



A map of the battlefield, showing landscape features and military activity

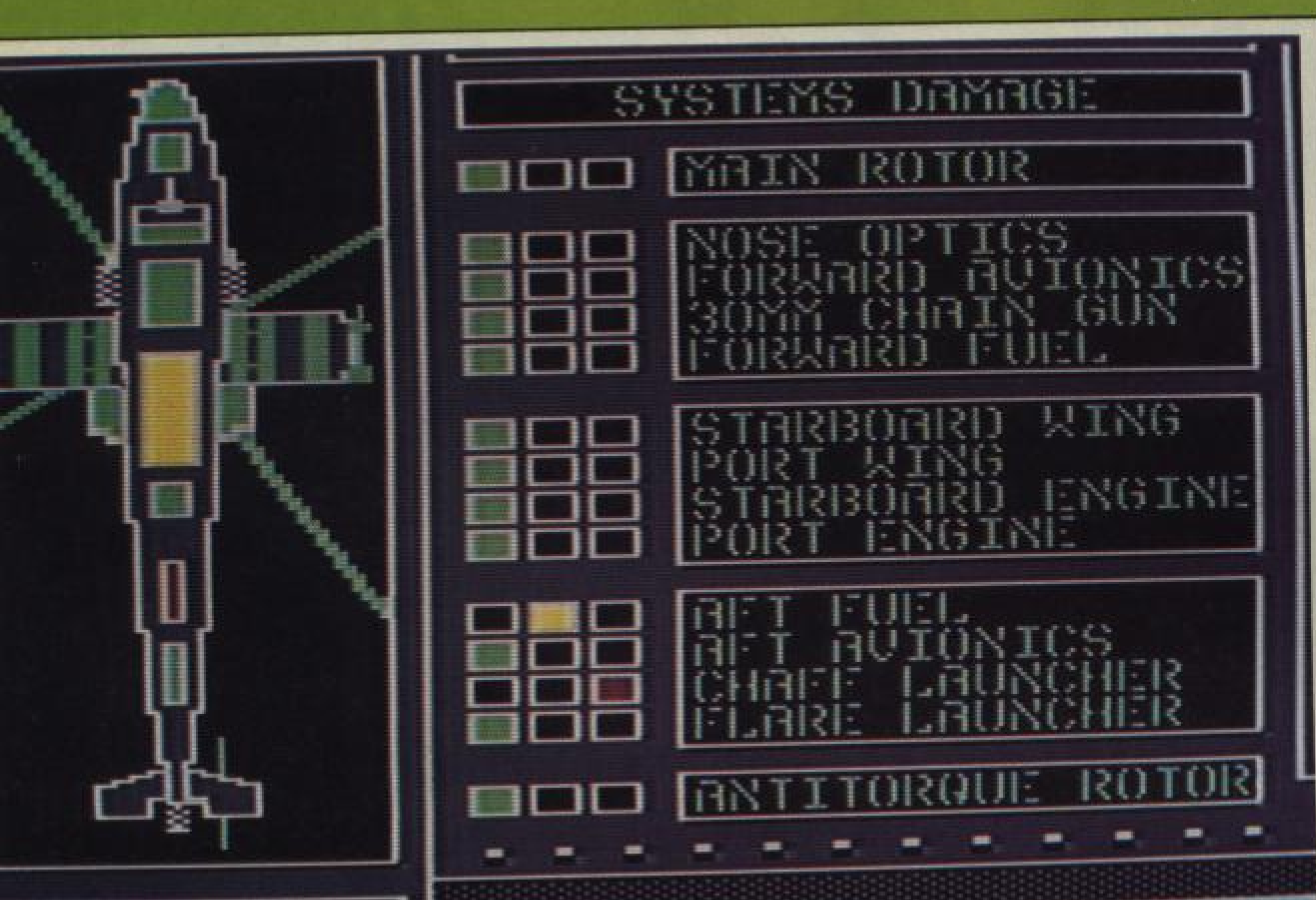
helicopter in the centre.

Two screens can be displayed to show the stores status and systems damage. A large, detailed map of the area can also be brought into the display if required, revealing landscape features, military installations and troop positions. A cursor on the map can be moved onto the flight objective so that the INS (Inertial Navigation System) on the cockpit display can be used to guide the chopper directly to the designated area.

A mission is considered complete when the helicopter's engines are switched off – either behind friendly or enemy lines. When the chopper 'powers down', the pilot is given his or her status. The craft can then be examined, repaired and refuelled, although certain situations may not allow these options. Debriefing follows with possible promotions and medals, and finally the performance is saved to disk, even if the pilot has been killed or is missing in action (when this happens, the pilot can't be used again). The program reverts to the options screen, and the pilot can try another mission, transfer to another unit or re-adjust the program settings.



A Damage Report can be called up at any time . . . here, the aft fuel tank and chaff launcher are in need of repair



CASSETTE

PRESENTATION 79%
The addition of a neat title sequence doesn't compensate for the slow, long-winded multi-load.

GRAPHICS 91%
Convincing 3D graphics, and the cockpit display area works extremely well.

SOUND 64%
Functional sound effects which could have been better.

HOOKABILITY 78%
Any initial enthusiasm is quelled by the lengthy and awkward multi-load.

LASTABILITY 71%
The five scenarios provide a wealth of missions and enjoyment which should keep a pilot happy for months – if the multi-load doesn't prove too frustrating.

VALUE 58%
Grossly overpriced.

OVERALL 72%
A superlative flight/combat simulation ruined by a painful multi-load system.

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ZONE RANGER

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Set in the multi-dimensional realms of space, you play an intergalactic Good Guy, shooting out malevolent satellites – despite the name of the game, you're firmly on your own: there's no futuristic Tonto to help out. Piloting a craft with unlimited reserves of fuel and ammunition you have to destroy a set of sixteen satellites that form an alien communication network before progressing to the next level where a similar task awaits . . .

Space is a relatively empty place on earlier levels – the target satellites drift gently, pulsing out light beams in four directions to maintain communication with their colleagues in the network. Chunky brown meteorites drift around aimlessly, doing no-one any harm as they follow the solar winds, and circular warp-holes created by the alien space engineers allow a canny pilot to hop from one part of space to another, painlessly and quickly.

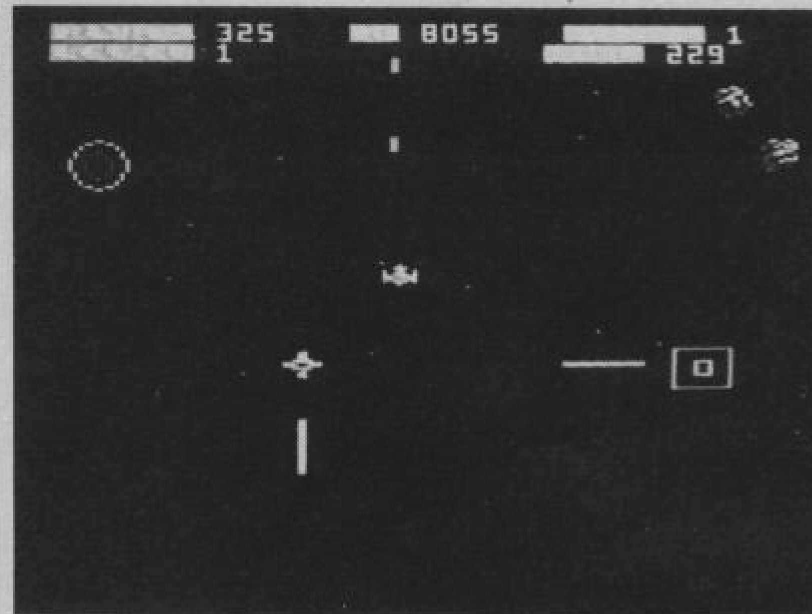
Your task is to destroy all the satellites on a level, and it can be completed in one of two ways. The most obvious solution is to zoom around space using the pulses of light generated by your targets to locate them, dealing laser death to the mechanical creations on an individual basis. Alternatively, locate the Super Portal which gives access to an Inner Sanctum – a maze constructed of force-field walls and moving barriers. Inside the maze you can pick up glowing dots by driving your craft into them – a tricky task, as the walls of the maze and circular field generators bounce the space cruiser around if it hits them. Contact with a moving red barrier or one of the yellow exit warp gates returns the cruiser to satellite-ridden space with a cargo of dots on board. If you can then find the Skyway Patrol craft, piloting the cruiser into it causes a satellite to be automatically destroyed for every dot collected in the Inner Sanctum maze.



This is a very slick two-element game that has you haring around open space on the trail of targets – or bouncing around inside a maze looking for a short-cut to satellite destruction. The graphics and sound are well-polished, as you would expect of what was originally a full-price game (even if it several years old), and the game-play contains enough to keep you hooked. You can't really go wrong with your two quid, especially if space shoot 'em ups have any appeal for you. Well done Firebird – what's next on the menu?



This might be archaic, but it's one of the best budget shoot 'em ups around. The instructions are deliberately sparse, leaving it up to the player to discover all the hidden features – and there are quite a number of them. Anyway, a lot of the fun is derived from suddenly being dumped into a situation and having to work out what to do next. I liked the variation between the frenetic blasting and dodging in the main section, and the slow bouncing around within the inner sanctum. The graphics are really odd – very unlike a 64 game in fact – and the sound effects do a good job in adding to the strange spacey atmosphere. Great stuff – put it high on your 'must buy' list.



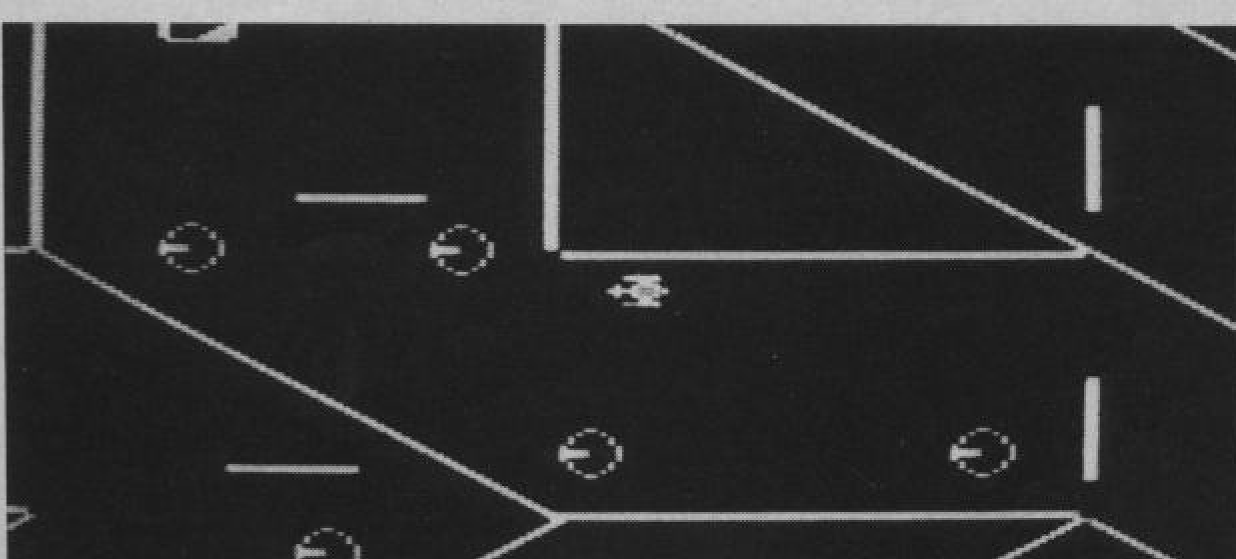
On early levels, the bolts of light emitted by satellites are green and harmless, but on later levels deadly red laser bolts are also encountered. Other hazards encountered more frequently on later levels are meteorites, and alien defence craft which materialise at random and give chase, firing laser energy in your direction and attempting to collide with you. To gain some respite, it is possible to drive into a Sonic Sparkler – a twinkling clump of dust that confers temporary invincibility.

Original equipment consists of four space cruisers, with an additional craft added for every 1,000 points earned. There is a set time for each level to be completed, and failing to destroy all 16 satellites within this limit results in the loss of one ship. When a complete network of targets has been destroyed any remaining time units are exchanged for bonus points.

Just to make life for a would be Space Hero that bit more frustrating, the aliens left behind an automatic robot repair system that sets about fixing up damaged satellites. The space cruiser's sensors detect robot activity, and when the alert sounds it's wise to seek out and destroy the offending android.



For something that's nothing more than an old variation on the Asteroids **theme,** Zone Ranger **has stood the test of time well. This is mainly due to its fast, exciting and addictive qualities. The graphics aren't astounding, in fact they're a slightly weak in places, but with game-play as good as this, you don't have to worry about little things like that. The frequent appearance of the Inner Sanctum maze provides a relaxing break from the otherwise hectic blasting. However it's never long before you're back into the action. The great thing about** Zone Ranger **is that it can be picked up and played at any time – it's a good, straightforward blaster that stands up well today against so many complicated games.**



PRESENTATION 82%
Elegant game structure, enough relevant on-screen information, and an attract mode.

GRAPHICS 81%
Little variety, but different, characteristic and very effective with it.

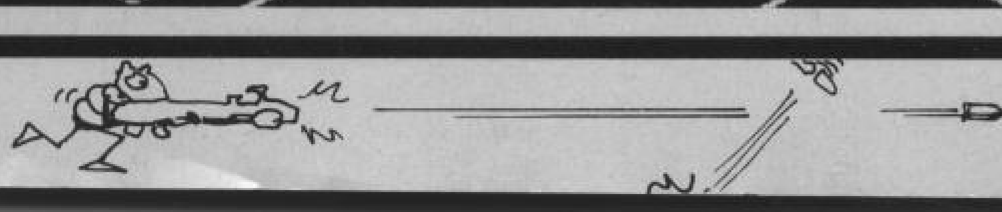
GRAPHICS 58%
A few functional spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Instantly rewarding and addictive.

LASTABILITY 77%
Easy to pick up and play – at any time.

VALUE 94%
A veritable bargain – not to be missed.

OVERALL 80%
A neat and cheap addition to the shoot 'em up range.

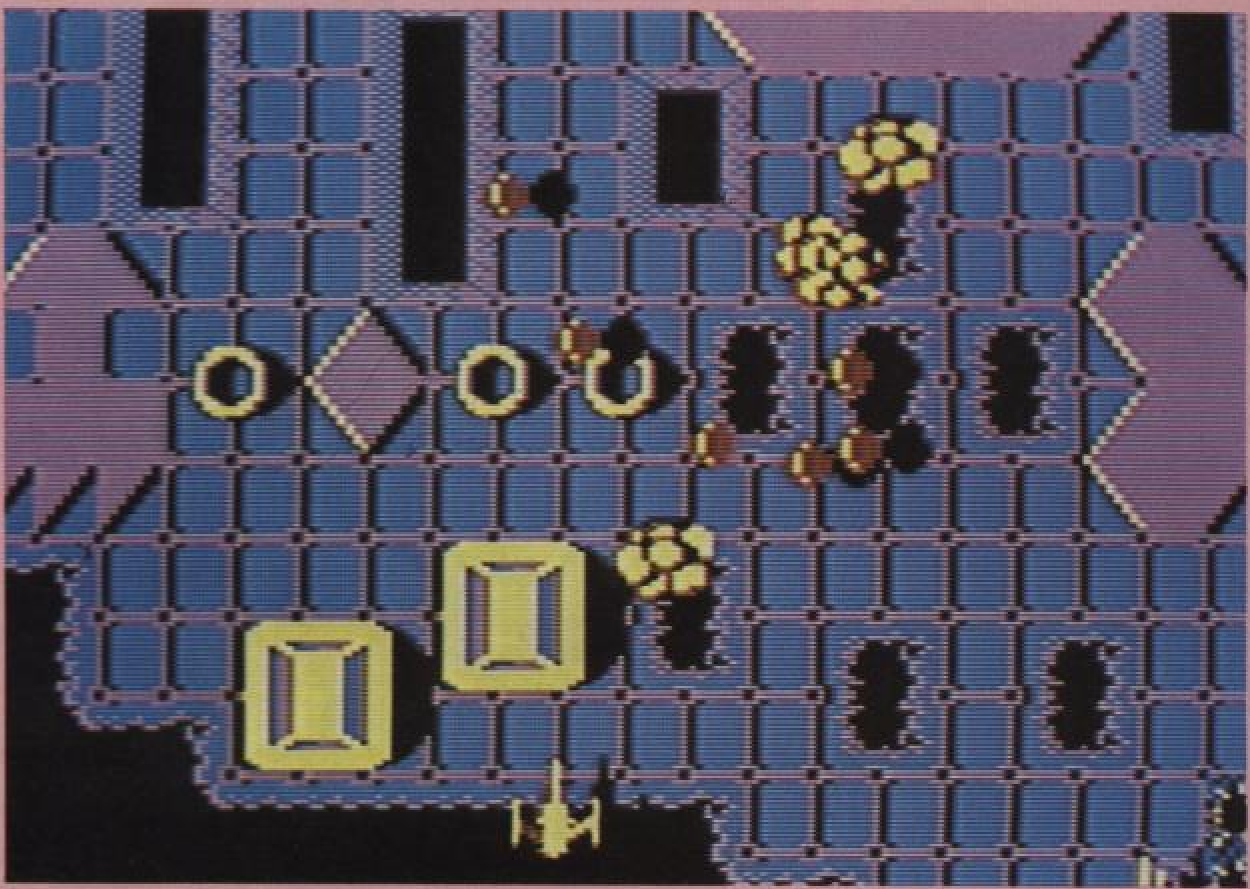


FIRETRACK

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick or keys

Industrial Pirates have invaded the eight worlds of the asteroid belt and declared independence. This hasn't gone down too well back on Earth, and the Government have decided to send a task force out to destroy the Pirate's base in an attempt to restore order. The task force, code named *Firetrack*, consists of a fleet of three ships, piloted by the greatest space fighter known to man . . . you!

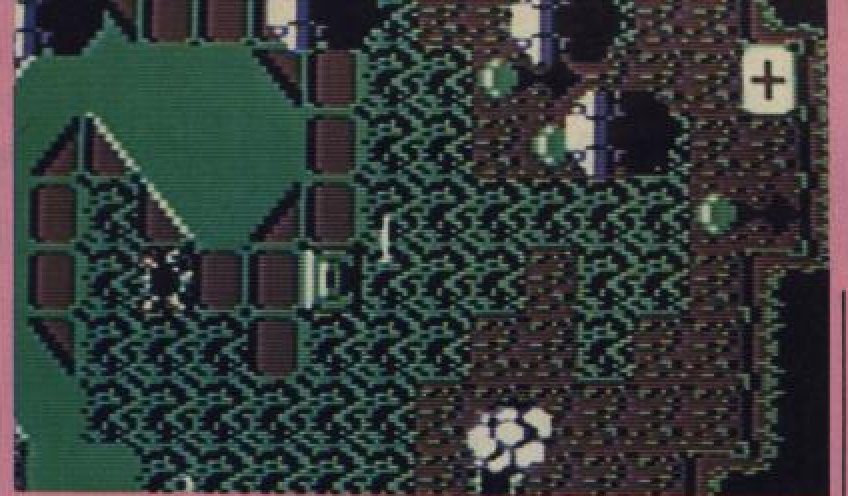
The objective is to fly over eight vertically scrolling worlds, destroying as many ground features as possible *en route*. A giant nuclear power generator is situated at the end of each world – when its two main cooling towers are destroyed the world is plunged

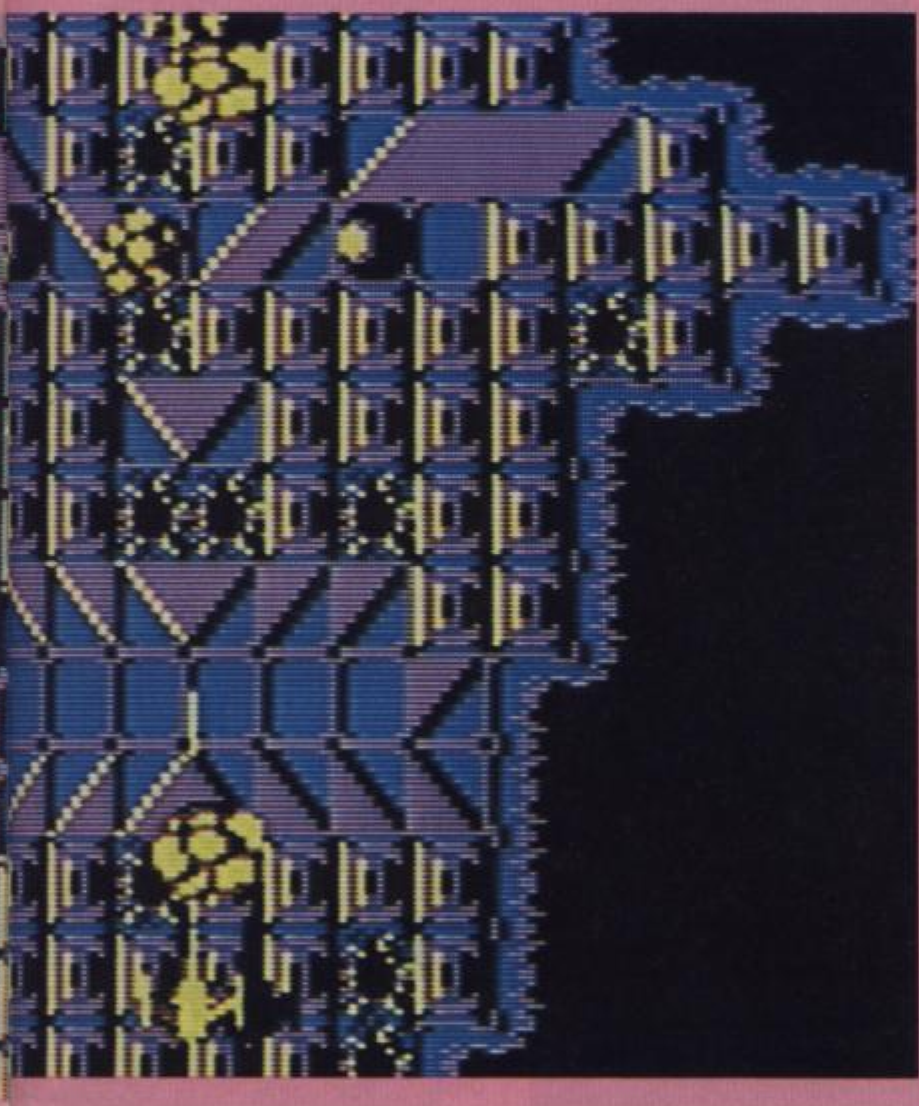
















Recently, vertical scrollers have become as common as muck, and in most cases aren't much better. This, however, isn't one of those cases – Firetrack is the fastest, most frenetic and playable of them all. The graphics are very unusual, with some strange colour schemes used on the backdrops, but the overall effect is brilliant – a very convincing and highly individual depiction of the surface of an alien world. What really makes Firetrack so good though, are the great fleets of alien ships swirling and swarming around in a state of organised chaos – you'll be hard pressed to find a more frenzied set of creatures. Try this out if you want to test your reflexes.

into darkness. This gives the pilot the chance to make a second straffing run over the world, before the pirates have a chance to rebuild.

Installations litter each landscape and points are awarded for destroying them. Some installations are marked with an 'x' or '+' – destroying these accumulates a bonus, awarded after the generator has been shut down.

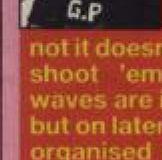
To progress from world to world, a hazardous flight across Commspace must be undertaken. Successfully crossing the void restores the Firetrack fleet to its full complement of three.

The journey across each world is made harder by the hundreds of anti-Firetrack pirate craft that swarm over the landscape. They attack with fervour, either kamikaze style or by unleashing missiles in your general direction. Contact with a ship or one of their missiles results in instant destruction.

When all Firetrack craft have been destroyed the player has the opportunity to continue another game from where Commspace was last crossed or, if so desired, a mission can be completely restarted with an attack on the first world.



Oh dear, another vertically scrolling shoot 'em up . . . but wait – Firetrack is different: it looks different and plays really well. It's unique in its use of colour and background designs, and can truly be said to be of arcade quality. The sound is a bit poor, but this in no way detracts from the fast and furious action. There is plenty of scope, including the neat option of being able to continue on from the same point reached on the previous game. Definitely one of the best blasting games for the Commodore.



Firetrack is odd. It just doesn't look like a Commodore game, and more often than not it doesn't behave like other shoot 'em ups. The attack waves are initially predictable, but on later levels it's a case of organised disorder – which I found very unnerving at first, but very effective. The collision detection is generous, which makes it all the more playable, and the whole thing is user-friendly – mainly due to the many thoughtful features, such as being able to restart a level if things go drastically wrong. Firetrack is attractive, immaculately presented, extremely playable and addictive, and a must for anyone who finds shoot 'em ups a big turn on.

PRESENTATION 93%
Unusual instructions, a superb set of options, and a neat, user-friendly game structure.

GRAPHICS 94%
Individual, but extremely pretty and very effective.

SOUND 72%
An odd soundtrack plays throughout, but there is a useful sound effects only option if it gets on your nerves.

HOOKABILITY 92%
Instantly rewarding and frenetic shoot 'em up action.

LASTABILITY 87%
Even the greatest of space pilots will find the eight worlds tough nuts to crack.

VALUE 85%
Enough action to warrant its price tag.

OVERALL 88%
Fast, frenetic and extremely playable – easily the best vertically scrolling shoot 'em up to date.

'OBVIOUSLY A ROARING SUCCESS...'





ZZAP! TEST

VOID RUNNER

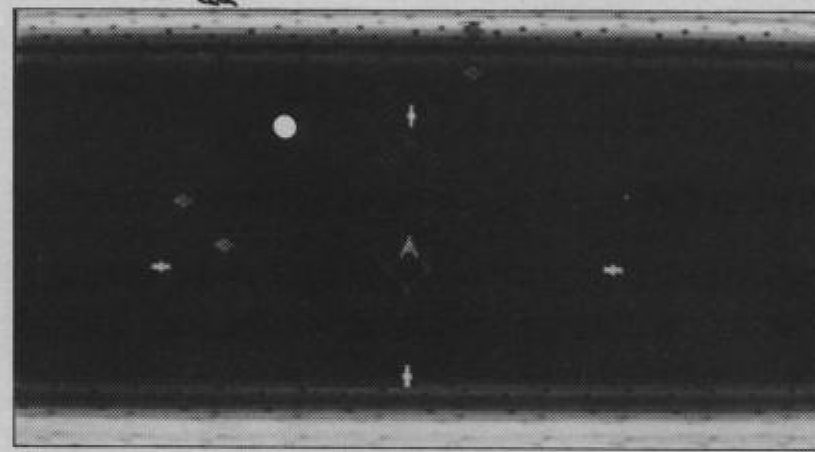
Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick only

The Droid Wars come to a head in this, the final conflict between man and machine. Following massive Droid activity on the planet Void, there have been rumours that the mechanical aggressors are planning to nuke Earth. To prevent this, five fleets of Void Runners have been sent out to destroy the Droid forces, before the deadly missile can be launched. As admiral of the five fleets, the future of Earth is in your hands . . .

The action takes place on a single screen: four tightly-packed Void Runner craft appear in the middle, and can be moved anywhere within its borders. The formation of the craft varies from level to level – sometimes they're linked together to form a star, either pointing upwards, downwards, diagonally or to one side.

When the action begins lines of Droid craft emerge onto the screen and maraud around. Contact between a Droid and a Void Runner results in destruction of the entire fleet, and play switches to one of the four back-up fleets.

Another deadly feature is the Teeran scanner, a glowing line which slowly moves down over the playing area, constantly wrapping round and returning to the top. Occasionally, it drops a scan line across the screen which remains 'active' for a few seconds and is deadly to touch.





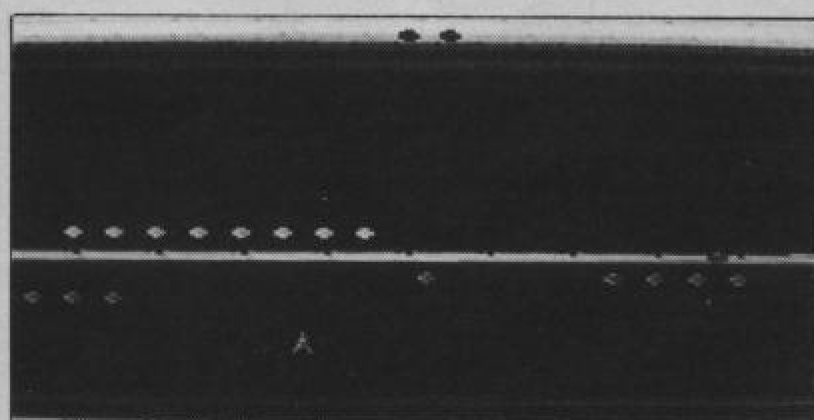
This is a real treat for the eyes, ears and aggression glands. Void Runner is a colourful, visually stunning shoot 'em up extravaganza, oozing with playability, addiction and challenge. As well as being extraordinary to look at it also has some really weird control methods. The first screen is fairly straightforward, but on later screens, when the ships start to split apart, it all gets incredibly confusing, adding mayhem to the freneticism. The action is incredibly fast and furious and has to be played to be appreciated, and there's plenty of challenge to keep any blaster happy for weeks. If you're after a superlative, and slightly off-beat, shoot 'em up then this is for you.



Mr Minter produces the goods yet again – and all for two quid! Void Runner **has got to be an all-time classic budget game. There's a hell of a lot of blasting to be done; most of it at an incredibly frenetic rate. There are loads of screens, and the amount of things whizzing about at any one time is almost too good to be true. There is a slightly annoying delay between screens as we are treated to some colourful Minteresque graphics, but this is a minor detraction from an otherwise excellent game.**

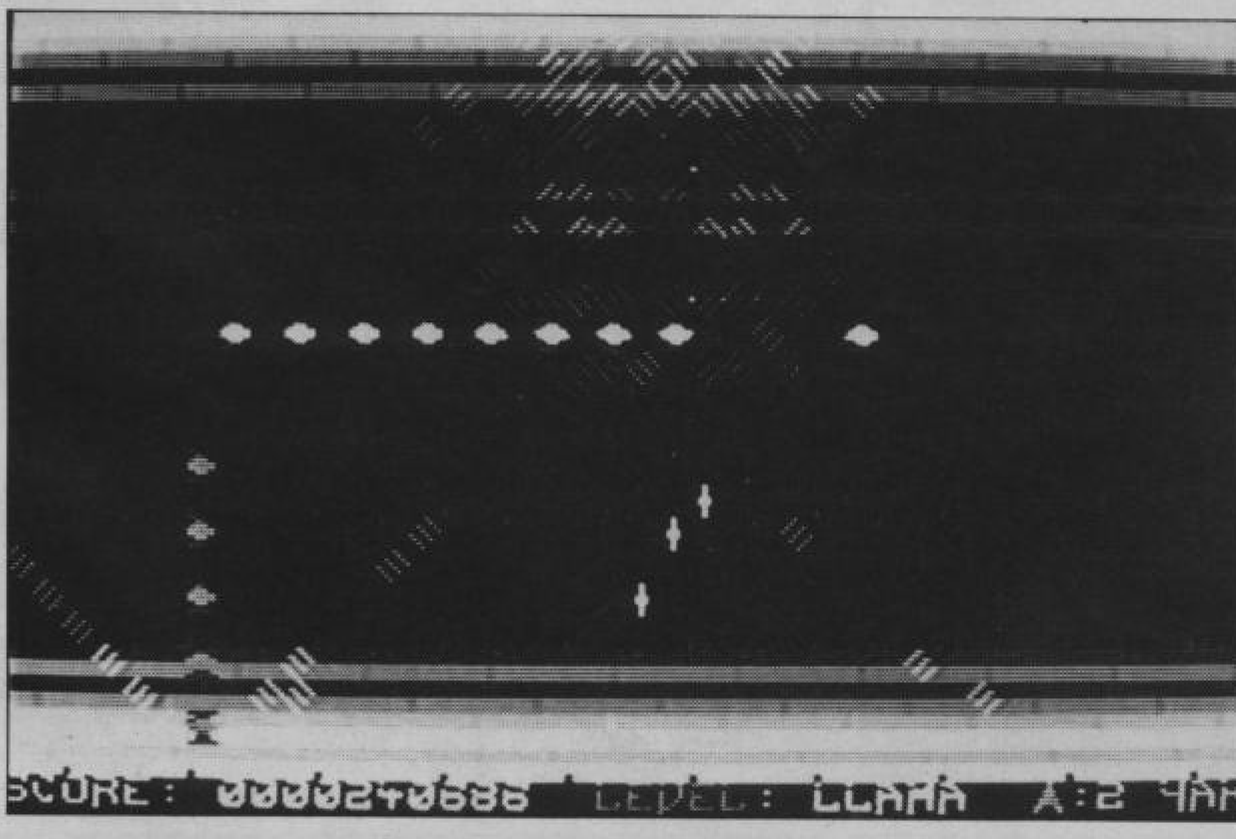


The most notable thing about Void Runner, is that its intrinsic simplicity is reminiscent of Jeff Minter of old – good solid, fast and furious blasting. Granted it's graphically sparse, but the emphasis is on impressive special effects rather than graphic definition. The sound's surprisingly weak, especially when you consider the sonic power that's usually present in Mr Minter's programs. Void Runner is easily one of the best budget buys around at the moment, and will serve to entertain until Revenge II appears – thank you Jeff, and thank you Mastertronic.



The fleet is capable of hurling defensive energy bolts across the screen, destroying the majority of Droid craft on contact. Not all of the Droids explode immediately – some change form when hit, turning into red blobs which fire a laser beam down the screen if the fleet flies beneath while others are indestructible and have to be avoided.

If enough Droids are destroyed the fleet progresses to the next, more difficult level. The mission ends when all five fleets are lost, although an extra fleet is earned when a screen is cleared of aliens.



PRESENTATION 67%
Colourful title screen and high-score table.

GRAPHICS 74%
No picturesque masterpiece, but the graphics do their job.

SOUND 59%
No music, but some suitably raucous sound effects to add to the atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 81%
The straightforward shoot 'em up action provides immediate appeal.

LASTABILITY 80%
Enough challenge to keep the most ardent blasters playing for weeks.

VALUE 93%
A steal at such a low price.

OVERALL 85%
An incredibly fast and frenetic shoot 'em up – definitely one for the collection.


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TEST

EXPRESS RAIDER

US Gold/Data East, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

It's time to sharpen up your bar-room brawling skills, saddle up the horse and get into the Wild West spirit – the coin-op train robbery game has moseyed into town. Eight trains are out there for the robbin'. Joystick-and-fire button beat 'em up skills are tested on alternate trains along with your prowess in a shoot-out.

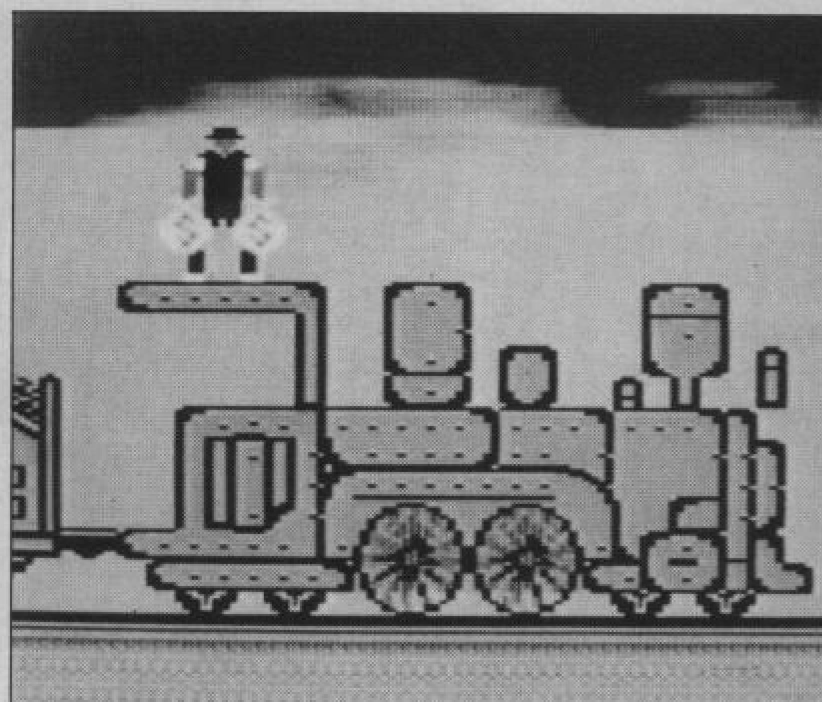
There are eight trains, with the odd-numbered locomotives involving hand-to hand fighting. The train begins to pull out from



This is fun to play and, like most arcade games, is very addictive. Running along the top of the train bashing the robbers is a great laugh, and the horse riding levels are enjoyable too. The graphics aren't bad at all, and capture the atmosphere of the arcade game nicely – the sound, however, is dire and only serves to annoy. The thing that puts a damper on the proceedings is the big question mark hanging over the lasting appeal? The eight levels shouldn't take that long to conquer, especially as you can restart the game where you died, and after they've been completed there's no compulsion to return. If you're interested try it out first – you might be disappointed.

the station, but before you can board there is a belligerent cowboy to be beaten up. With that menace out of the way, hop on the guard's van and start fighting your way along the rooftops of the moving train. Six types of opponent are encountered on the rooftops: while most of them are straightforward bare-knuckle brawlers – gunmen, seated bottle-hurlers, ankle-grabbers and non-fighting crate pushers are also encountered. Reach the locomotive and two lovely bags of money come into your possession.

In the fighting sequences, a tug o' war bar in the centre of the status area at the top of the screen keeps track of the hits, moving left as you are pummelled and to the right as you land punches and



kicks. When the bar fills its window, the current opponent is defeated and a nifty leap takes you on to the roof of the next carriage – a bomb placed on the coupling is automatically defused during this exercise.

Mounting a horse and galloping alongside the even-numbered trains, the aim is to pick off the on-board gunslingers. The horse gallops along in the foreground, and moves up and down the screen allowing you to dodge the weapons and bullets hurled from the carriages. Pressing fire shoots a bullet from your gun's limitless reserve.

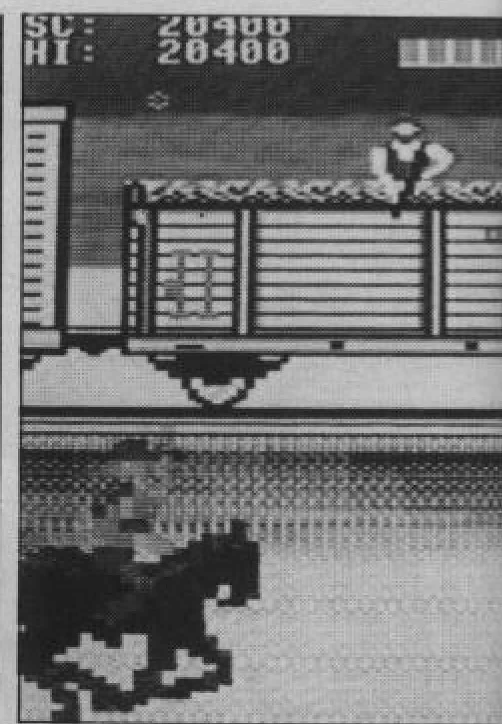
Some of the trucks are open-top goods wagons, where the gunslingers pop up above the parapet to fire at you, while other carriages are armoured passenger cars and the defenders slide open the shutters on the windows before loosing off a shot or hurling a weapon. Open-sided goods wagons provide cover from which bounty hunters also take pot shots at marauding robbers.

It's possible to duck behind the horse to avoid the fusillade that heads your way, or a particularly well-aimed shot can take out the approaching projectile in mid-flight. A little row of boxes at the top of the screen indicates how many gunslingers have to be shot





Express Raider **is a very simple game, but it has an enormous amount of instant appeal with the urge to get 'just one stage further.' I must admit to playing this mostly on the practice level, which provides you with plenty of lives and allows you to get further into the game itself. The graphics look slightly shoddy, but they work well enough – as does the sound. I have my doubts about the lasting appeal after it's been completed, but if you're after a fast enjoyable action game then** Express Raider **is worth checking out.**



before the next carriage can be attempted.

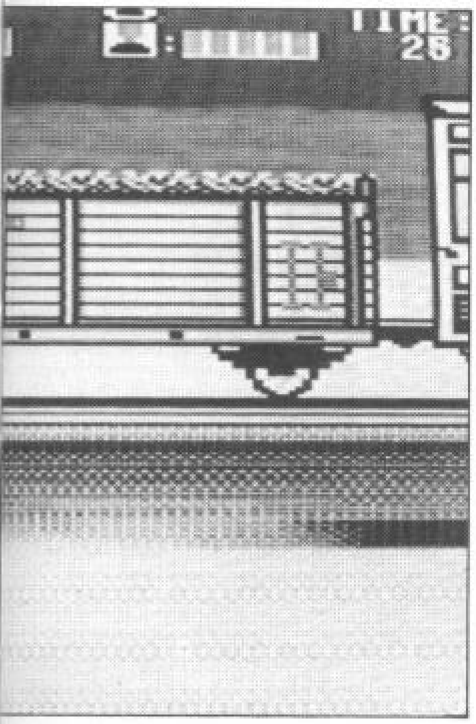
Occasionally a bird flies past carrying a bag of money – shoot it for bonus points. Bonus points may also be won by shooting the sack of money that a frightened clerk hurls from a window in the armoured carriage – but take care not to shoot him. If you blow away



This is quite a frustratingly addictive game that combines two styles of game quite neatly. For the most part, the fighting sequences don't present too much of a challenge – advancing on your opponent while jabbing the fire button frantically, usually ends the conflict quickly and cleanly. The shoot-out sequences, on the other hand, are a much trickier and require a lot of concentration if you are to manoeuvre the horse to aim the gun AND avoid the missiles coming your way. There are a few neat touches that add to playability. The graphics are suitably atmospheric but the sound is decidedly dodgy. Overall, a compulsive game to begin with, but one that might pall once the full set of eight trains has been completed.

your benefactor, he shouts 'No' and all the little boxes at the top of the screen fill up again: the gunslingers you have killed in the carriage are miraculously reincarnated.

Whether shooting skills or fighting skills are being tested, each carriage in a train has to be dealt with inside a time limit. In the combat sequences, failing to jump to the next carriage in time explodes the bomb on the coupl-



ing and the train separates. Natural hazards, including tunnels and dangling signs complicate matters when you're fighting along the rooftops, sapping the energy reserves of a careless cowboy. The higher levels feature tougher defenders, and the quantity of the opposition increases – extra gunslingers have to be faced on later shoot-out levels, although a few seconds are added to the target time for each carriage.

Four skill levels are offered on the start screen, and three modes of play. In practice mode you have 32 lives but can only attempt the first two trains; five lives are supplied in normal mode, but when they are used up pressing fire within ten seconds allows play to resume at the guard's van of the current train. Super proficient train robbers can attempt the advanced mode, where the game restarts from the very beginning after five lives have been lost.

PRESENTATION 74%
Sufficient instruction and a useful practice option.

GRAPHICS 82%
Effective scrolling and definition.

SOUND 62%
Awful tunes, but good spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 76%
The simplistic arcade action proves instantly addictive.

LASTABILITY 57%
Not enough variety to hold the interest for very long.

VALUE 49%
Expensive for such a limited game.

OVERALL 60%
Nothing special, but it may provide some short-term entertainment.

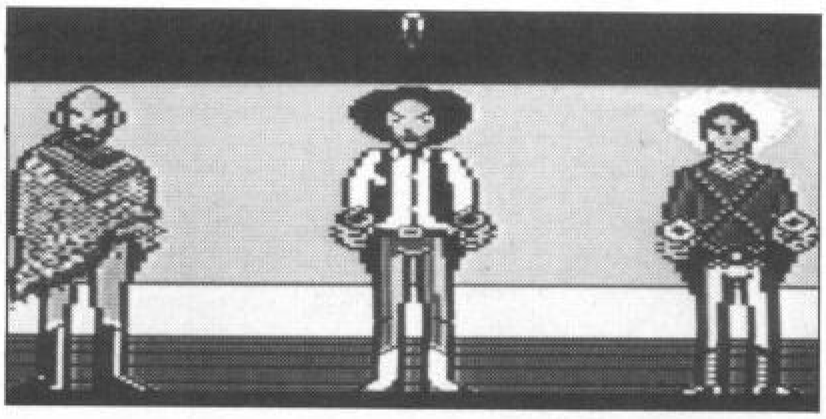
WEST BANK

Gremlin Graphics, £4.99 cass, joystick or keys

Loaded down with riches accumulated during the Gold Rush, hundreds of pioneering folk head for the famous West Bank of Dakota to protect their loot from low-lives out to make a quick killing.

Acting as a bank teller, your aim is to take a deposit from behind twelve doors which lead into your office. The character on the other side of the door might have other ideas about this though, so a quick decision must be made as the door opens. Should they be a clean-living farmer or saloon girl, coming to place their hard-earned savings with the bank, take the cash. But should you be confronted by an outlaw brandishing a gun, you must act in the best interests of the bank – and shoot them. If, however, you make a wrong decision and shoot an innocent person, one of three lives is lost.

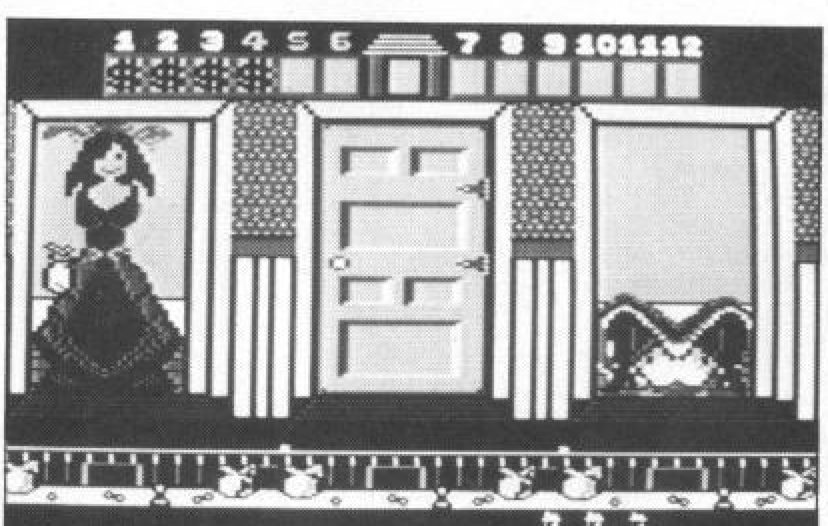




As cash deposits are obtained, a Dollar sign appears at the top of the screen in one of the twelve boxes corresponding to each door. Only three doors appear at one time, so when these are dealt with, the office wall is scrolled in either direction to reveal three more doors which have not yet been involved in any transactions.

This process continues for two whole days, split into nine stages. Taking all twelve deposits completes a stage, and you are then confronted by three of the local desperadoes after your blood. These outlaws must only be disposed of once they have drawn their guns, points being awarded on the speed with which your assailants are despatched. If you shoot too early however, another life is lost.

When the shoot-out is over, the action continues inside the bank – however, the robbers are more devious and doors close quicker.





Essentially West Bank **is a game that tests your reactions and recognition. It may not sound exciting, but it's very compulsive and had me coming back for more, time and time again. As you progress further into the game the action becomes faster, and it can become quite a job to keep up with the pace.** West Bank **is a good package, and well worth a look as it's good value at five quid.**



It just took one game of this to put me off. It's completely and utterly BORING. Having to play it a couple more times 'just to make sure' was sheer torture. West Bank **is simple, completely banal and takes tedium to new extremes. There's nothing to do but prod one of the three keys at the right time, then scroll the screen when three cash-toting people have appeared. The program might be regarded cheap at a fiver, but personally I think it's a complete and utter waste of money.**



West Bank **provides quite a bit of fun at first. The music is very jolly and reaction games such as this tend to be quite compulsive. However, my interest soon waned as there is little variation. Graphically,** West Bank **is very smart, with plenty of colour and neatly presented characters – but as to whether you will still be playing in a fortnight's time . . .**

PRESENTATION 60%
Adequate instructions and a few useful options.

GRAPHICS 80%
Large, colourful characters and a neat layout.

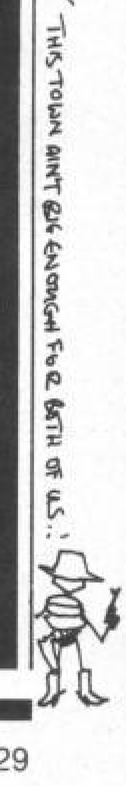
SOUND 70%
Atmospheric music, but a bit repetitive.

HOOKABILITY 75%
Strong initial compulsion due to its simplicity.

LASTABILITY 51%
Playable, but not varied enough to hold the interest for very long.

VALUE 66%
More than half the fun at half the usual price.

OVERALL 60%
Good, simple, solid entertainment – for a week at least.



JAIL BREAK

Konami, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Up until now, conversions of Konami games have arrived courtesy of Imagine – from now on however, Konami have decided to produce and market their own conversions rather than sell licences. The first Konami-produced conversion off the production line is *Jail Break*, soon to be followed by *Nemesis*.

The inmates from the local prison have broken out of their cells, seized the repeating rifles from the armoury and overrun the town. The Warden is tied to a stake in the middle of his own prison, and the convicts have captured innocent men, women and children to aid their bargaining position. You are the sole surviving lawman, and it's up to you to rescue as many of the hostages as possible, while eliminating the rampaging prisoners before they do any more damage.

Starting out in the city streets armed with a pistol and an endless supply of bullets, the aim is to make your way along four horizontally scrolling sections and rescue the Warden for a massive 50,000 point bonus. Prisoners dressed in striped prison trousers scurry along the streets, bare-chested and dragging a ball and chain. Almost all are armed, and they loose off triple shots at the merest provocation.

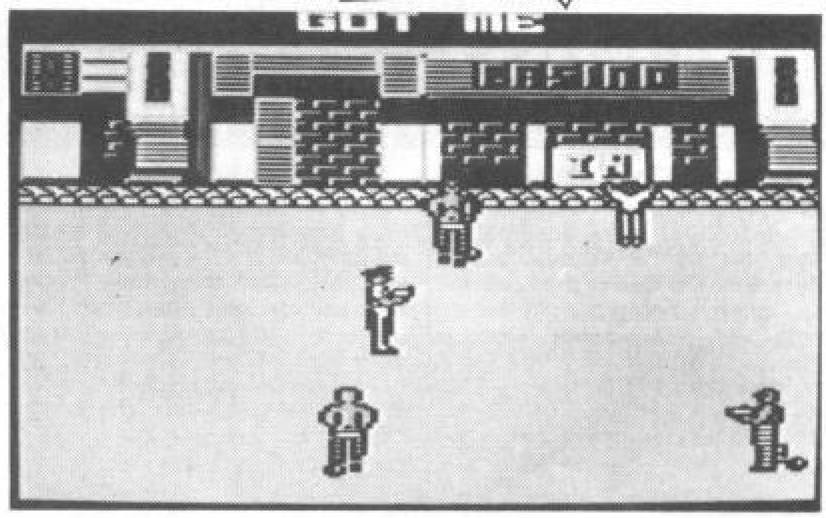
The action is viewed from the side, with the policeman moving in one of four directions, firing his weapon in the direction in which he is facing. Convicts lurk below manhole covers, peeking out to take pot shots, while snipers have installed themselves in vantage points beside the roadway. The prisoners run along the road from right to left, turning from time to time to shoot across the width of the street and occasionally sending a bullet or two from the left of the screen. Five lives are provided, and touching a convict or stopping



I think Konami would have been better off leaving this conversion to Imagine and collecting the licence fee. The game quickly becomes routine – count the three shots fired by a convict as he turns to fire across the street, and then move forward. The collision detection is decidedly ropey – sometimes a bullet can pass through your feet and do no damage while at other times the 'Got Me' message flashes up to indicate that you've lost a life and you can't work out what hit you! The controls feel cumbersome; it's tricky to line up with the convicts when shooting along the street and the animation is rather minimalistic. Overall a disappointing start to Konami's in-house conversions, that doesn't do justice to the competence of their arcade games.

a bullet leads to death, with play resuming from the start of the level (unless you expire half-way along a section).

Rescuing hostages by walking into them earns bonus points and more advanced weapons. The first hostage rescued earns a tear gas launcher, while the second liberated citizen hands over a rocket gun. The additional weapons appear as icons on a status panel at the base of the screen, and pressing the space bar toggles between the weapons held. All added weaponry is lost when you die.





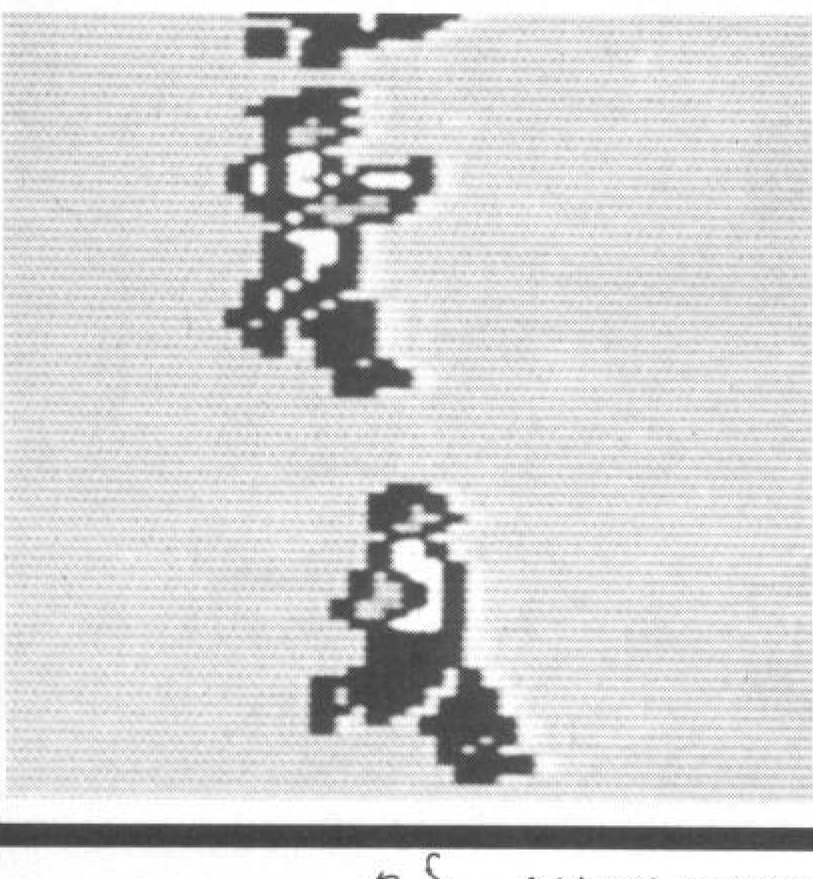
Jail Break **is abysmal. It would only have been slightly less awful if it was a little easier, if there was more variety, and if the collision detection wasn't so poor. It's phenomenally frustrating to get shot when it looks as though a bullet is going to miss. What's more infuriating though, is that a prisoner can shoot you when you can't shoot him! Even with infinite lives, I found it incredibly difficult to get through to the last level – and when I did, I was astounded to discover that there are only four very similar, banal and simple levels. A complete waste of time and money – wholeheartedly recommended to those with extreme masochistic tendencies.**



For a first release from Konami, Jail Break **is extremely disappointing. It is lacking in so much – not only are the graphics jerky and ill-defined, but the game-play is seriously deficient. It's the little things that are only noticeable by their absence that really let it down. For one, there's the appalling collision detection; sometimes I walked through a stream of bullets and other times I died for no apparent reason. There's the way prisoners appear with only half a body, and the totally unconvincing way in which the characters move . . . I could go on, but it's easier to say give this one a miss.**

Barrels litter the streets obstructing progress – the only way to dispose of them is to use the rocket gun, while the tear gas launcher allows you to kill off snipers. All three weapons are deadly against the running convicts, and 500 points are collected for each convict, sniper or barrel destroyed. According to the inlay, hi-jacked trash vans career down the streets and can only be stopped with the rocket gun, but after extensive play in the office the vans had still failed to appear . . .

After fighting your way through the city streets the action transfers to the park, and then moves on to the waterfront as you approach the jail itself. The final section is played against the drab grey institutional interior of the prison: take care when approaching the Warden – the prisoners are likely to shoot him before those lovely points can be collected. When the Warden has been rescued or killed by the convicts the game cycles round to the beginning again and another rescue mission can be attempted, but this time the convicts are really out in force . . .



PRESENTATION 46%
Adequate packaging, poor instruction, and basic in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 37%
Crude sprites and backdrops, and juddery scrolling.

SOUND 62%
A good tune plays throughout.

HOOKABILITY 39%
Far too difficult and repetitive to be rewarding or enthralling.

LASTABILITY 26%
Immensely frustrating and tiresome to play, and only four similar stages to complete.

VALUE 24%
Not enough variety or playability to warrant the price tag.

OVERALL 30%
A bad conversion of an unremarkable arcade game.





PRODIGY

Electric Dreams £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

On the planet of Mechworld, all life is completely automated – even the inhabitants are machines. For many years the mighty computer systems used on Mechworld have theorised about the possibility of organic life and now, deep in the mechlabs, the Machine Sorcerer Wardlock has made their dream a reality.

Incarcerated in his labs are Solo the Syntleman, a synthetic humanoid, and Nejo, a humanoid baby. Solo has realised that as the result of a laboratory experiment, he and Nejo are doomed to remain under examination in the mechlabs until they die.

In order to gain their freedom, Solo has devised a plan to distract the Sorcerer by feeding confusing data into his terminals, thereby disabling his security systems. He and Nejo may then make good their escape, and attempt to find other organic life before further experimentation takes place.

You take the part of Solo, directing him around the maze-like mechlabs in search of security units, which are then used to disengage Wardlock's security system.

Solo's movements are joystick controlled, and his task is hampered somewhat by the fact that he must also take care of Nejo, who follows him about on all fours.

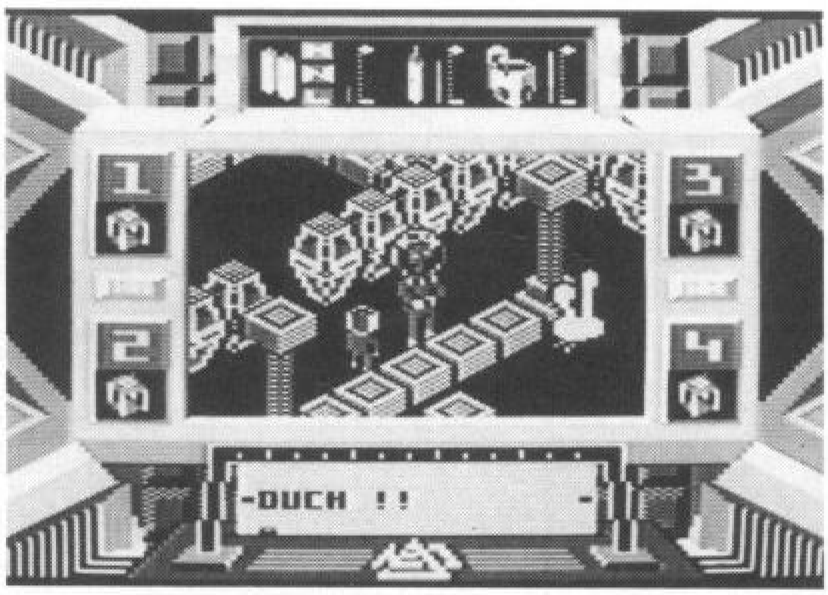
The little prodigy takes quite a bit of looking after; indicators at the top of the screen tell you when Nejo needs cleaning up and when it is time to feed him. Another display also indicates the current oxygen supply level, which needs replenishing from time to time.

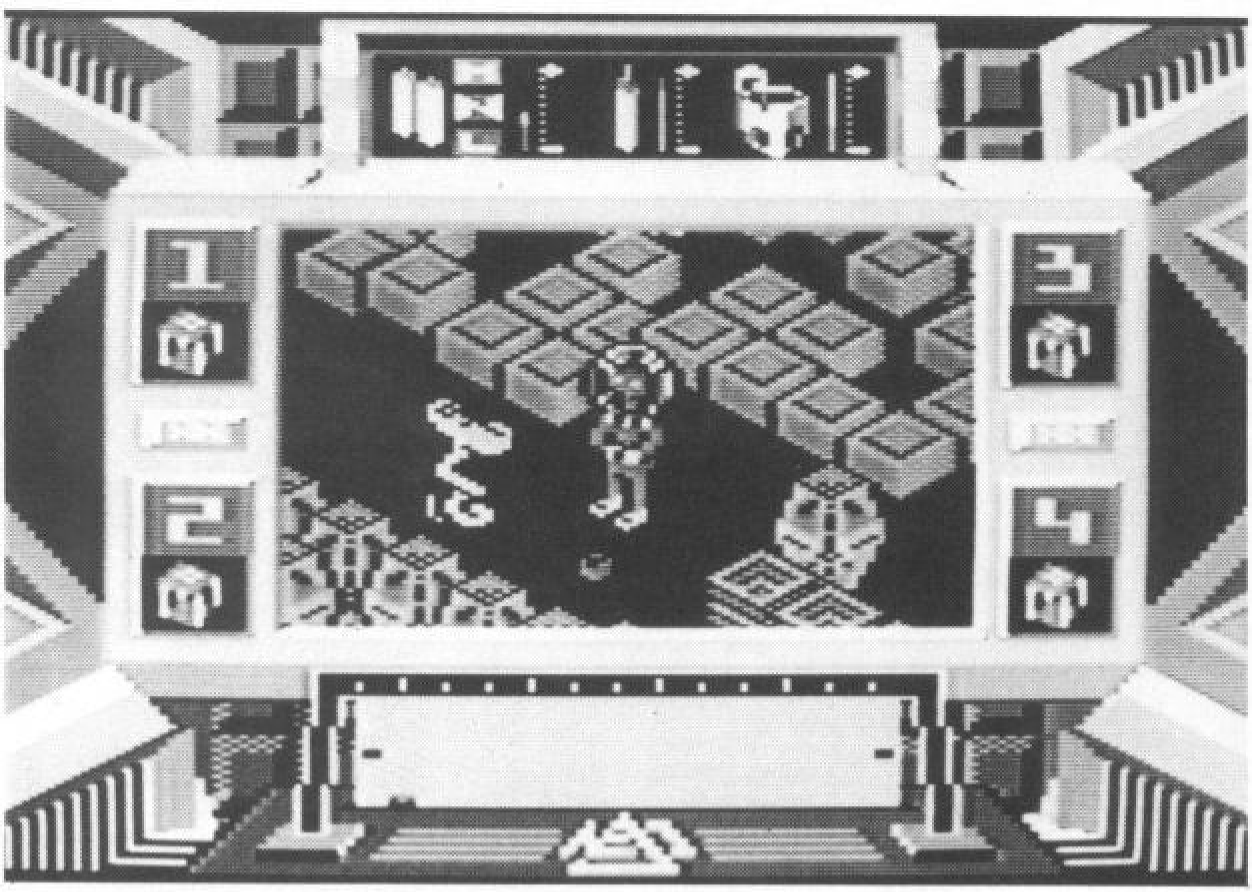
The central display is taken up by a view of one of Wardlock's monitors, giving a forced-perspective 3D picture of the captives, their present surroundings and Wardlock's failed experiments – specifically the Bloberites and the Globewells. These hinder your progress around the labs, and repeated exposure to them causes you to be returned to your initial location in each zone.

The mechlabs are divided into four major zones, termed Ice, Vegie, Tech and Fire. Movement between them is speeded up by use of a teleport system, which is activated by simply walking into its chambers.



This is completely unplayable. It's incredibly difficult to get the baby to follow the spaceman – in some places it requires a pixel perfect move before you can progress. This is so frustrating, and when the aliens start moving around and getting in the way it all becomes too much. It's a shame really – if a little more thought had been put into the game-play, then it could have been quite good. As it stands it's no good to man or beast.







Here we go again, great concept – bad implementation. Prodigy **is another of those games that fails because too much has been crammed into it. The game-play, what there is of it, is slow and repetitive and the graphics don't do anything to encourage further play. The control method is awkward, making the game suffer even more, and trying to make that awful child follow you is near impossible – and when it is mastered it's even slower than before! I didn't enjoy playing** Prodigy, **and I doubt it will appeal to many.**



In essence, Prodigy **is a simple seek-it-out maze game, a type which I really don't enjoy. The initial difficulty encountered in attempting the simplest manoeuvre rapidly destroys any compulsion to explore, and Nejo is a real pain – if he's not lined up correctly with a door he just stands against the wall, immovable. The lab's defenders are a continual hassle, and you spend most of the time trying to avoid them rather than looking around. This is far from the best game of its genre, and unless you are desperate for a forced perspective maze-game I would advise you to look elsewhere.**

PRESENTATION 65%
Sparse instructions, but good in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 60%
Reasonable definition, but unconvincing forced perspective.

SOUND 45%
Fair title tune, but little in the way of spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 34%
Fiddly control which is immediately off-putting.

LASTABILITY 45%
Large playing area – if you can be bothered to stick at it.

VALUE 31%
Ten pounds is a little steep for a monotonous and unplayable game.

OVERALL 40%
An interesting concept which suffers from severe playability problems.

NEMESIS™

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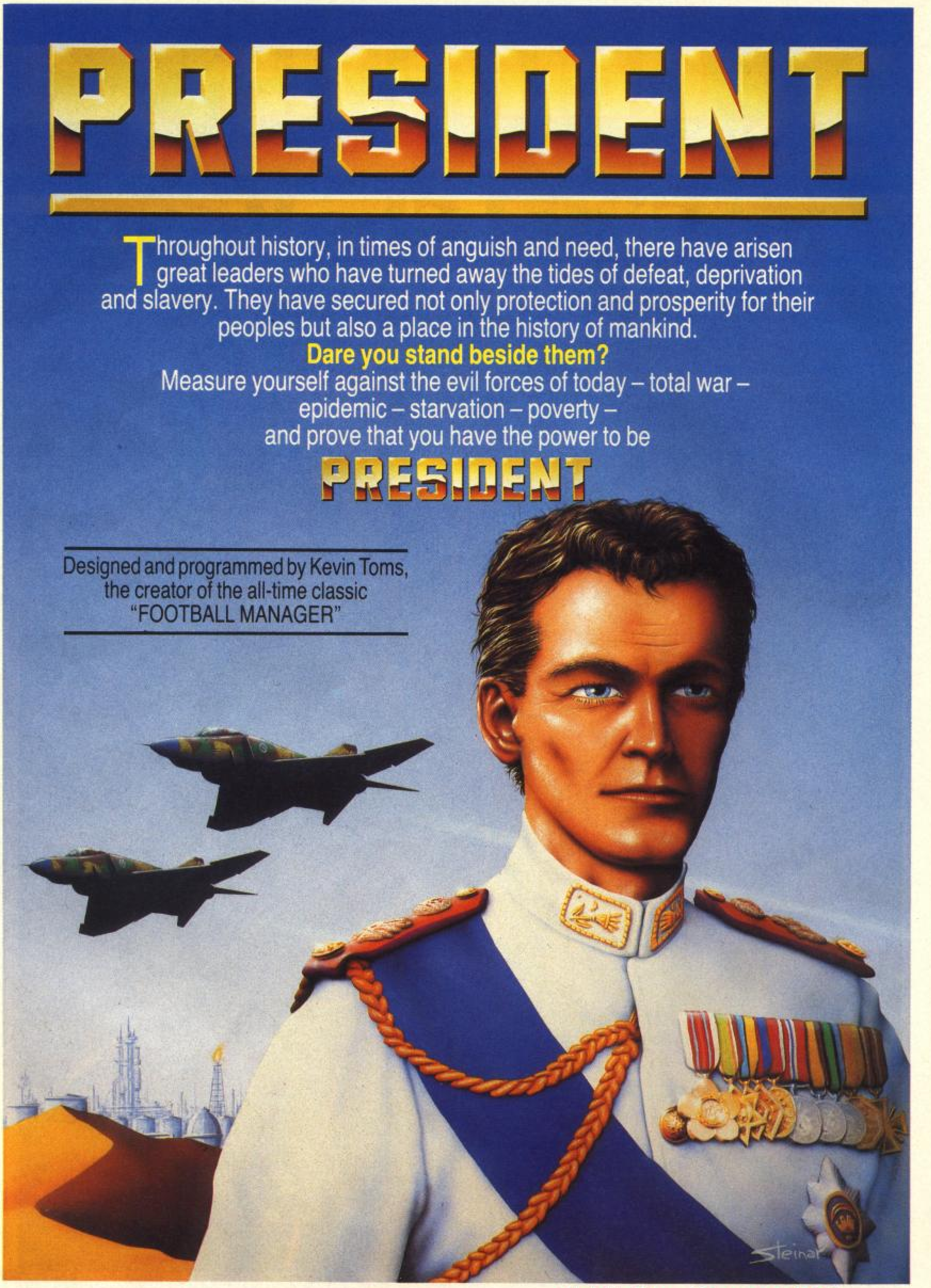


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SHORT CIRCUIT

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick with keys

Number Five is a SAINT (Strategic Artificially Intelligent Nuclear Transport) series robot, produced for the US military by Nova Robotics. By a bizarre stroke of fate, this omnipotent killing machine has been zapped by a million-volt lightning bolt and become a living entity, with a conscience and a will to survive.

This doesn't meet with the approval of either the security forces, who are none too keen on having a laser-toting robot wandering all over the place, or Nova Robotics, who want to dismantle him and find out exactly what has happened. Both want him back – and not necessarily in one piece!

Short Circuit is divided into two sections, relating to Number Five's escape from the Nova factory, and his subsequent attempts to remain free by evading his pursuers.

The first section takes the form of an arcade adventure, in which the robot roams through a research complex, searching for the equipment necessary to complete his laser and jumping mechanism. Without these he cannot successfully escape from the factory. He also needs to discover the technical data which enables him to produce a decoy robot. This is then used in the next stage to fool the authorities.

The second section follows Number Five's journey across country, hotly pursued by his would-be captors. The local wildlife must also be avoided, as his conscience is so troubled by the death of living things that he shuts down if he inadvertently harms too many creatures.

On completion of the dummy robot, which is destroyed in his place, the robot makes his way to his human friends' van and freedom.

Number Five is joystick controlled and, as in reality, has only one life. To account for this, there is the option to play the second stage without having to complete the first.



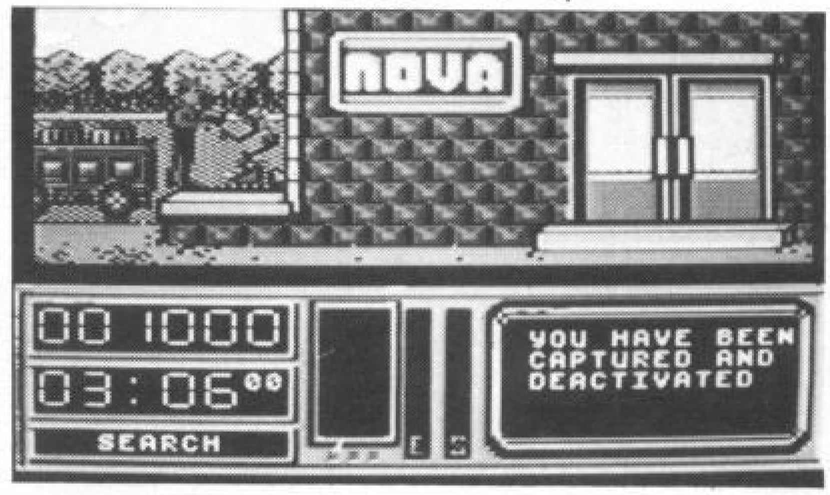
This is very 'nice' and 'cute' with some pretty graphics and jolly tunes, but there's nothing in the action to make an impact. The arcade adventure section is tedious and unrewarding, and the chase sequence is boring and completely silly. There's nothing outstanding about Short Circuit **– it's just another addition to the huge mountain of average 'licensed' computer games.**

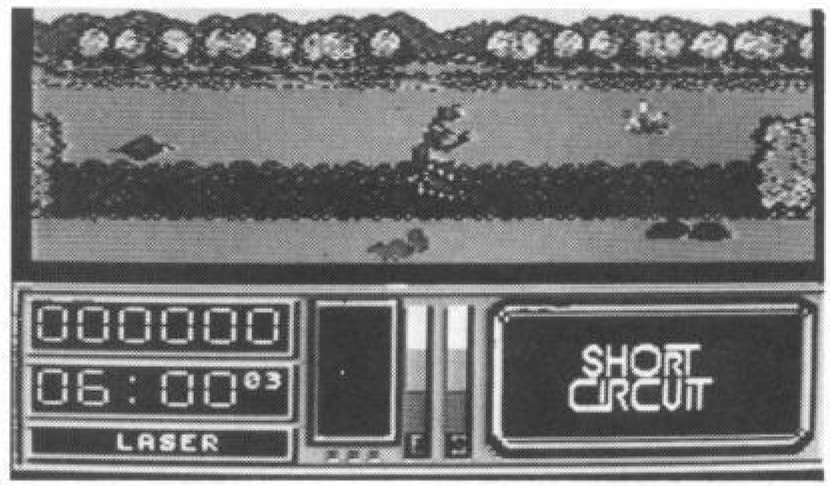


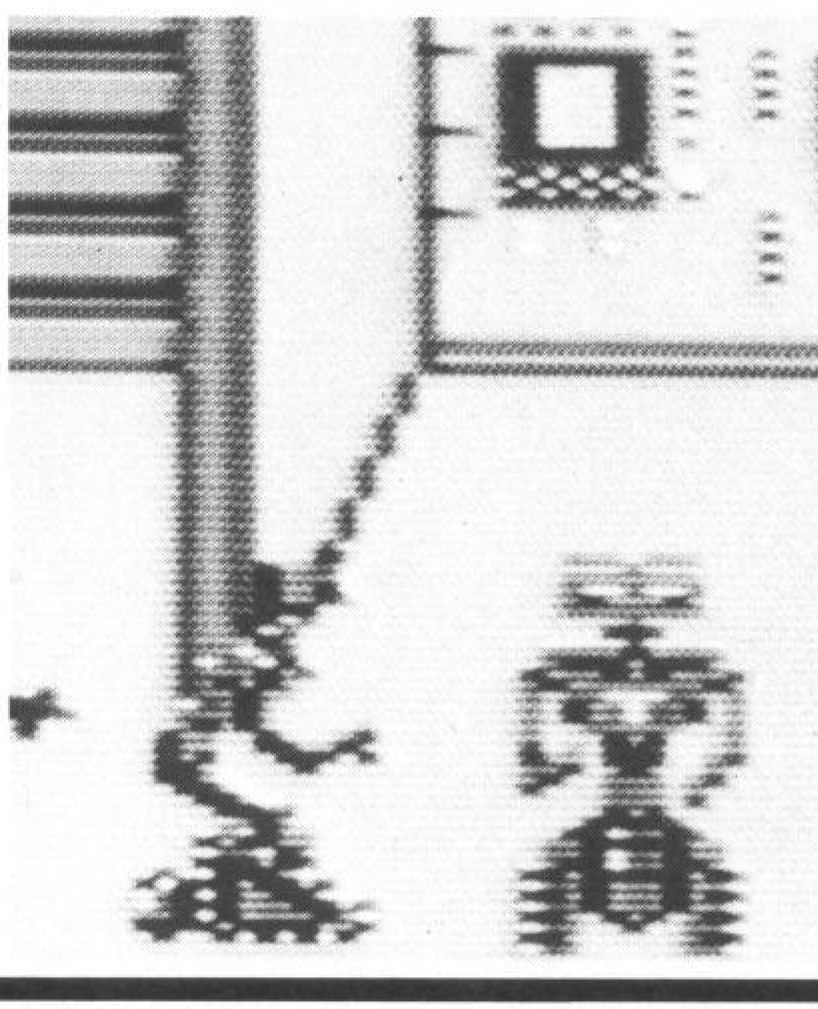
Oh dear, another film tie-in – and this one is a pretty poor effort. Graphically, Short Circuit **offers nothing new – Number Five scrambles about in a rather awkward fashion, and the interiors on the factory section are presented in crude 3D. The second stage is better, but is annoyingly difficult to play – both sections tend to be very repetitive, as any progress depends on a previous knowledge of the screen layouts. This means that you can expect to die quite a few times before completing a section, not to mention the entire game. Certainly not one of the better arcade adventures available, but may have a limited appeal.**



Short Circuit **joins the growing range of licensed games that have not been exploited to their full potential. Both sections are weak – the arcade adventure part is repetitive and fairly dull to look at due to the grey backdrops and scenery. This unexciting playing area didn't inspire me to play further and successfully enter the second half – which isn't much better. The graphics are occasionally humourous but more often than not are crude.** Short Circuit **is just another average game with a nice licence slapped on to it.**







PRESENTATION 78%
Decent loading screen, good instructions, and a few useful features.

GRAPHICS 59%
Poor first section with Number Five looking and moving badly, but the second section is fairly attractive.

SOUND 76%
Reasonable in-game music, and a good version of poor tune on the title screen.

HOOKABILITY 60%
Easy to get to grips with, and despite the weak game-play it still retains some addictive qualities.

LASTABILITY 39%
Interest soon wanes, due its repetitive nature.

VALUE 41%
Two limited levels is not enough to justify the price.

OVERALL 49%
A strange choice of licence, poorly interpreted.


'ROBOTS JUST AREN'T ME...'

LEADERBOARD (EXECUTIVE EDITION)

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

It's time once again to put on the old plus-fours and dust off the golfing trolley. Yes, it's *Leaderboard* – the *Executive Edition.* The designers of the world famous golfing simulation now bring you a souped-up version, with the added realism of playing on a course with bunkers, trees and rough.

The player is presented with an initial choice of completing the course alone or in a group of up to four people, with three levels of difficulty which may be set differently for each individual. Unlike



If you liked Leaderboard, **you'll love this –** Executive Edition **is a very well executed successor. The trees and bunkers are neat, and there is more scenic variation between the different holes than before. Overall, the game is superb – but, if you have the first version, I would seriously think before buying the** Executive Edition. **Ten quid is a lot to pay for a few additional bunkers and trees.**

the earlier edition, there are only two courses with this version, the first of which is included with the game while the second has to be loaded separately.



So you bought Leaderboard **and enjoyed it so much that you bought the** Tournament courses. **But is it worth buying this** Executive Edition? **Well . . . the trees and bunkers do add a little something, but don't make enough of a difference to justify a purchase. No – even if you haven't played** Leaderboard, **I wouldn't recommend this at the price. Get the original** Leaderboard **instead – it's just as playable and has twice as many courses.**

On selecting the required options, the screen presents a full-perspective, first-person view of the fairway. This overlooks the golfer, who appears at the bottom of the screen ready to tee-off.

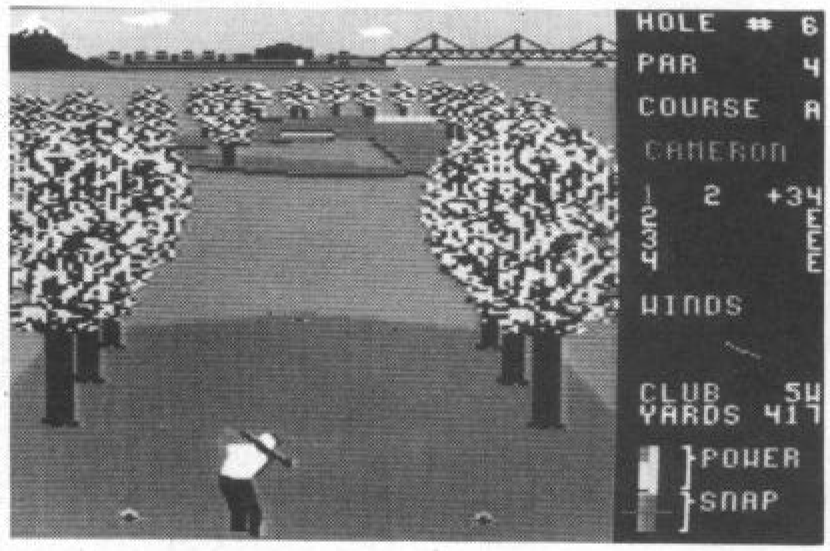
Control of the golfer is by joystick and is identical to *Leaderboard.* A cursor is positioned on-screen to indicate the ball's direction of flight, and an information panel on the left gives the course details, including the wind strength and distance to the hole. This allows you to make your choice of club from the set provided, which ranges from a One Wood right through to a Nine Iron and Pitching Wedge.

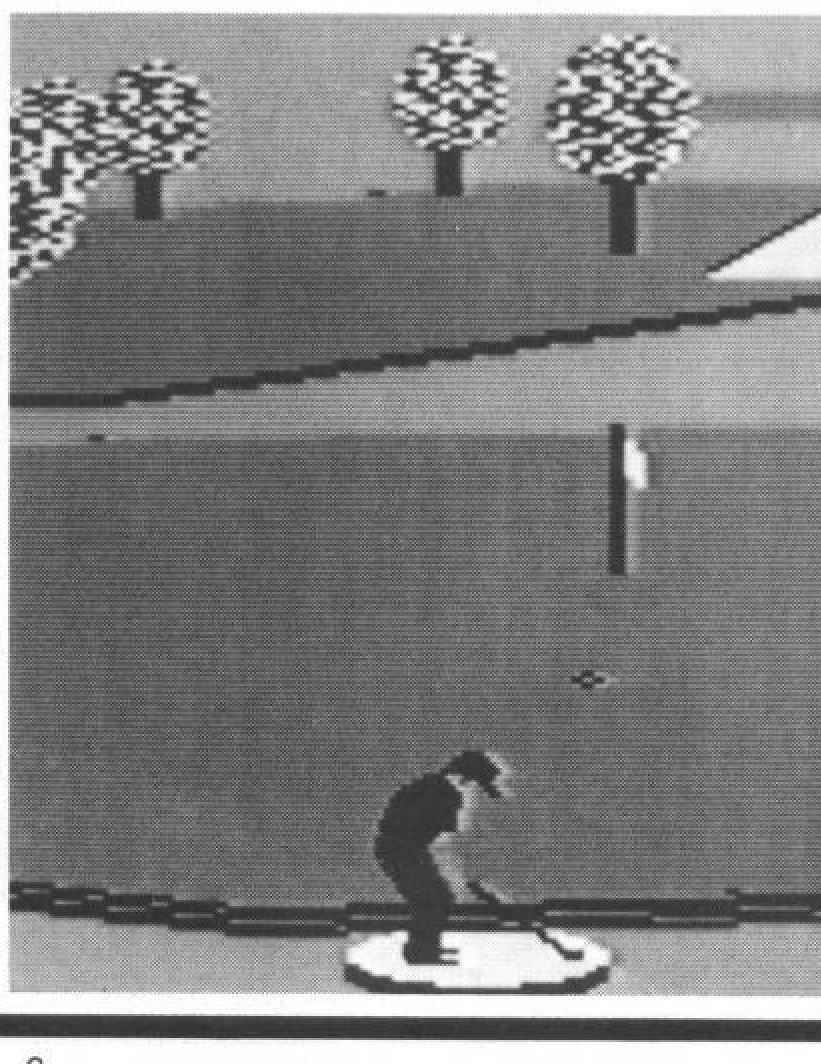
On pressing the fire button, a power-bar scrolls down, which is stopped by another click of the button. The amount of bar revealed corresponds to the strength of the shot. A second bar then appears which is controlled in the same way, enabling you to determine the amount of hook or slice on the ball. This coincides with the movement of the golfer as he swings and hits the ball down the fairway.

When the ball eventually stops, the screen is re-drawn to show the golfer's view of the course as seen from his new position. The action always faces the hole, and the process is repeated until the ball lands on the green.

When play is finally within putting range of the hole, the golfer is automatically given his putting iron. A small pointer appears to the left of the hole, which shows the direction and amount of slope, enabling you to compensate with the strength and direction of your shot. The information panel also changes to display a larger power-meter where the bar is simply stopped at the required strength for the putt.

Successfully holing the ball brings up the current scoreboard, which shows the individual hole scores and the running total for each player. See you at the nineteenth hole!







This is an extremely polished golf program, and it deserves plenty of credit. It's very playable and boasts some wonderful attention to detail, but the problem lies in the fact that it's just too similar to its forerunner. The only real differences are the bunkers, the trees and some new scenery – there's nothing new in the game-play. It plays exactly the same as the first version and the new features fail to offer anything new or exciting. Having said that, it's still enjoyable to play, but I wouldn't part with a tenner for it, especially if the original Leaderboard **already graced my software collection.**

PRESENTATION 94%
A large range of options, features and effective touches. Great on-screen presentation and useful instructions.

GRAPHICS 89%
Superbly drawn courses in true perspective. Brilliant animation on the golfer.

SOUND 78%
No music necessary or provided, but the sparse sound effects are spot-on.

HOOKABILITY 82%
It is possible to get straight into the game on the easier level and then work your way up as proficiency increases.

LASTABILITY 63%
There are only two courses included with this version which may soon prove tiresome.

VALUE 52%
Rather expensive considering that it is so similar to *Leaderboard.*

OVERALL 72%
Not a vast improvement on the first edition, and should definitely be seen before purchasing.



KRAKOUT

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Krakout is a re-working of one of the oldest forms of computer game – *Breakout*. An arrangement of blocks is presented on-screen, with a bat either on the left or right. A ball is launched into the playing area and bounces around the screen, destroying the blocks on contact. The player moves the bat up and down to stop the ball going off the side of the screen. When the screen is cleared, another pattern is brought into view.

Not all blocks explode as soon as the ball touches – some require two or three hits before disappearing, and others turn into silver squares which can be hit again to give the player an advantage. These advantages include missiles to fire at the blocks, a reduction of the ball's speed, an explosion destroying adjacent blocks, giving the bat the ability to catch the ball and fire it back, a double bat, a shield behind the bat, an extra life or an expanded bat.

Aliens wander around the playing area and explode on contact with the ball, deflecting it in a random direction. Some aliens are more deadly than others – one freezes the bat on contact and another actually eats the ball and spits it back in an unplayable form! But not all of the aliens are bad news – one turns into another ball when hit, while another destroys all blocks on screen.

A life is lost when the ball gets eaten or goes past the bat – when all lives are lost the game ends. An extra life is awarded every 10,000 points, or when a block marked with an 'X' is hit.



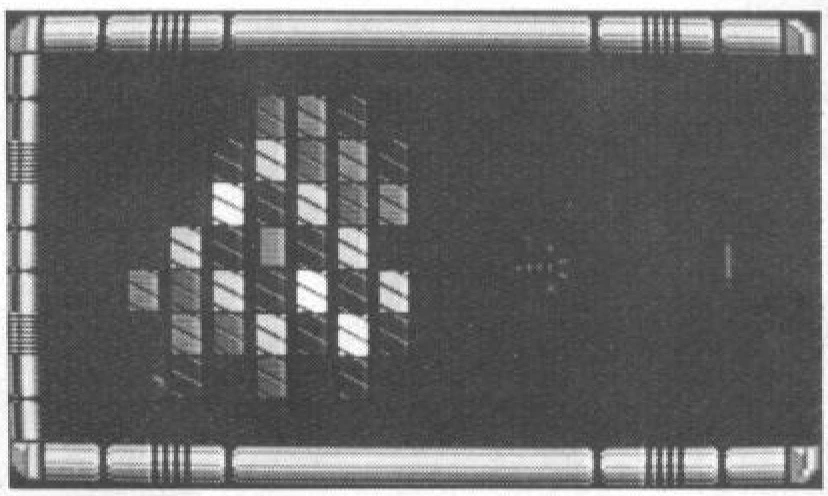
This is NOT the 'Ultimate Challenge' as the cover would lead you to believe – it's a re-hash of a nine year old arcade game. Having said that, Krakout **is still enjoyable, and has a sort of intangible, mindless – almost theraputic quality. The graphics are extremely pretty with superb use of colour. Sound-wise the program is poor with an extremely nauseous 'jolly' tune and some poor sound effects. The worst thing about this program is its price tag – I'd think pretty hard before shelling out a tenner for it. There's not enough variety to warrant such a high price.**

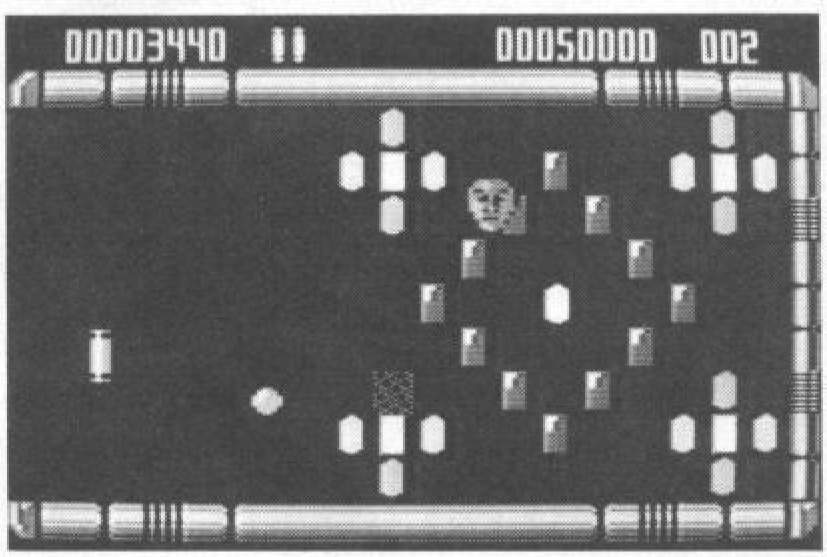


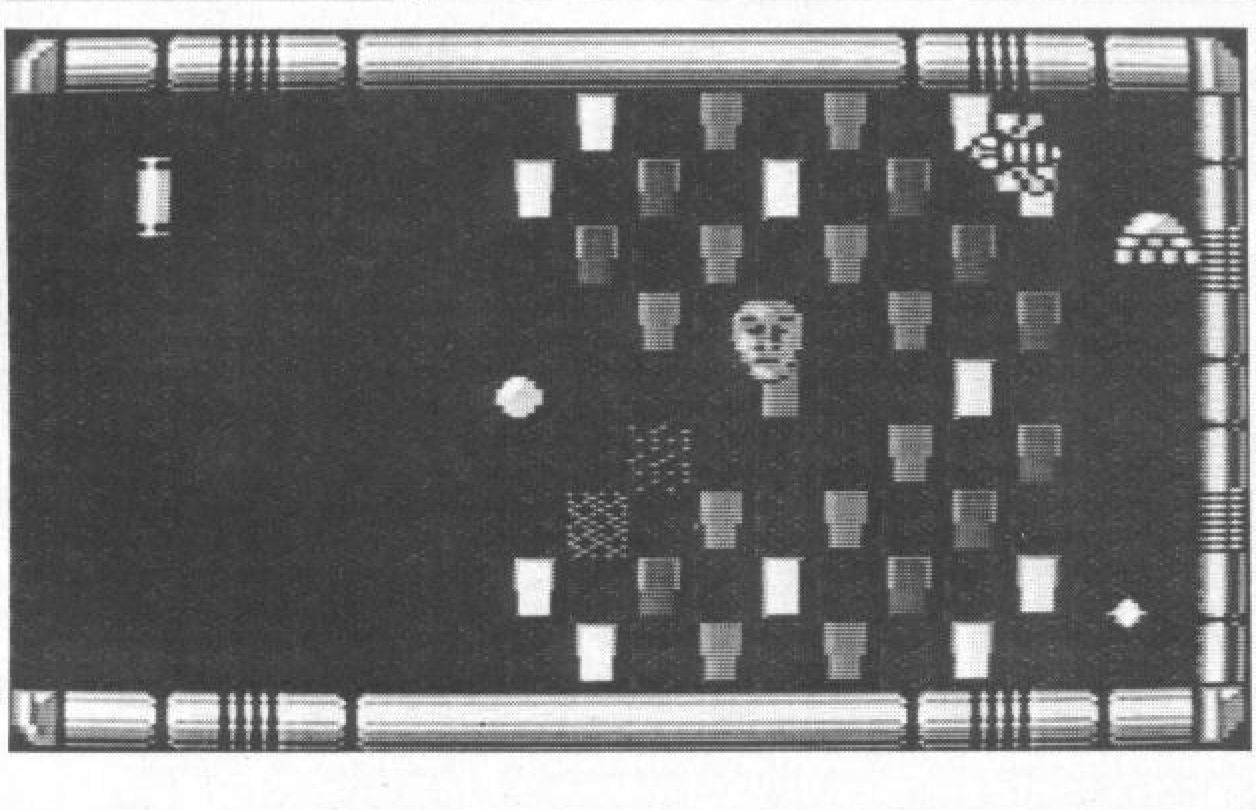
Breakout **is** Breakout **– improving the graphics and sound, changing the name, and attempting to improve the simplistic and dated gameplay by introducing new features makes very little difference. I first played** Breakout **seven years ago – and I'm not in the slightest bit stimulated by its return. Especially when it costs so much – ten quid is a ludicrous price to pay for mutton dressed up as lamb. What bugs me most though, is that its arrival shows that it's got to the stage where people are starting to run out of ideas. It's all very well attempting to inject new life into an old theme, but when it's this aged and tired, why bother? I wouldn't. Having said that, it is worth considering Imagine's officially licensed version of glorified** Breakout – Arkanoid. **It's more playable and marginally less expensive.**



Yet again Breakout **rears its ancient, ugly head – and this version is essentially very similar to the original. Okay, so there are a few extra options, and it's possible to alter the look of the game considerably, but the variety from screen to screen is still pretty limited.** Krakout **is quite pretty to look at: there are a lot of nice effects and some of the aliens are very neat – but smart graphics alone don't make a poor game more playable.** Krakout **is an uninspiring concept which is pleasing to play for a while, then simply becomes tedious.**







DON'T CRY – I'VE GOT A HANKY FOR YOU

PRESENTATION 90%
Comprehensive option screen and adequate instructions.

GRAPHICS 77%
Very pretty backdrops and sprites, but there's essentially only one screen of action.

SOUND 56%
A very annoying tune plays throughout, although this can be changed to the rather feeble spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 71%
One of the simplest computer concepts – bashing the ball back is simple and enjoyable.

LASTABILITY 52%
Although there's one hundred screens, it soon gets monotonous and predictable.

VALUE 39%
A high price to pay for the sake of reminiscence.

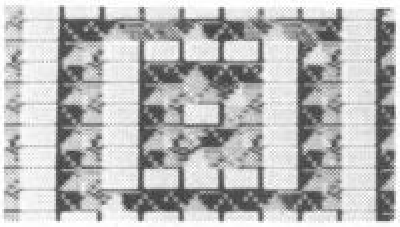
OVERALL 55%
An unremarkable re-working of an out-dated theme.

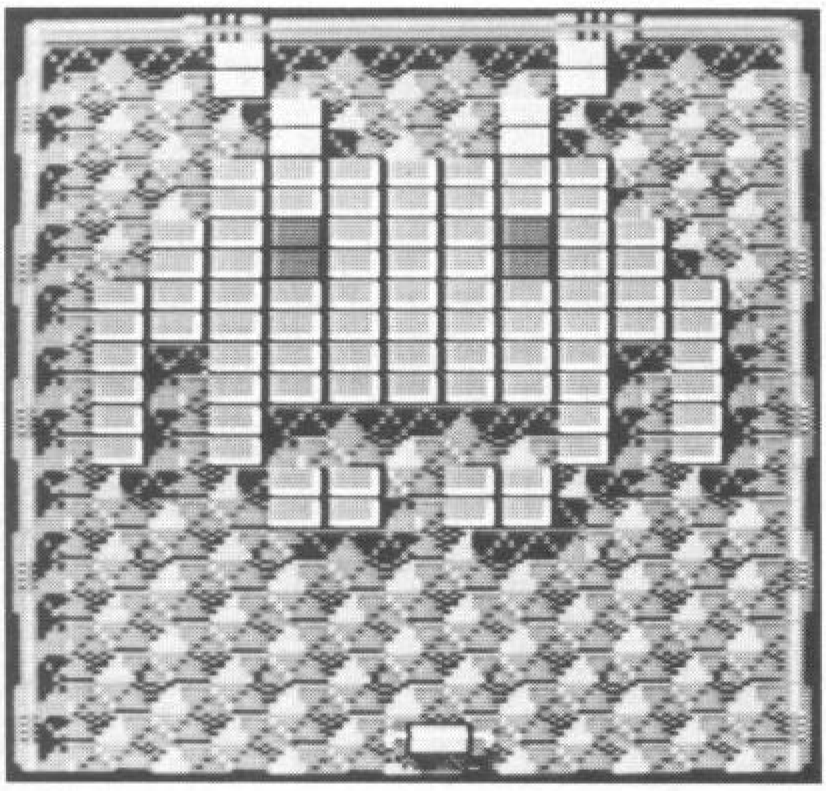
ARKANOID

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick, keys, paddles and mouse

Something strange has happened. The mothership *Arkanoid* has exploded and a small spacecraft, the *Vaus*, has scrambled away, only to be sucked into a void inhabited by *The Dimension Changer*. This horrid creature has transported Vaus into a strange dimension – 32 block-patterned screens. The Vaus has to move from one screen to another by clearing each screen of blocks, finally confronting the Dimension Changer on Level 33.

The Vaus sits at the bottom of the screen and a ball is launched into the playing area. The ball bounces around the screen and ricochets off the sides, destroying the blocks on contact. The player moves Vaus left and right to stop the ball going off the bottom of the screen.





Not all of the blocks explode on contact. Some take a few hits before disappearing, others, when hit, drop a spinning capsule which can be collected to gain a feature – such as expand bat, slow down ball, the ability to catch and relaunch the ball, a laser to shoot at the bricks, an escape route to the next screen, and extra life and split the ball into three separate balls.



This seems to be the month of the Breakout **revival – still, this version is extremely good, and probably the best around at the moment. Graphically, it's great – pleasant backdrops and good use of colour throughout. It also has that strange indefinable quality that makes it so playable. Unlike** Krakout, **there is a definite urge to progress from screen to screen, and the task it provides becomes a challenge rather than a chore.**

Aliens float about the screen and although seemingly harmless, they pose an indirect threat to the Vaus – when the ball hits an alien, it explodes and sends the ball flying off in the opposite direction.

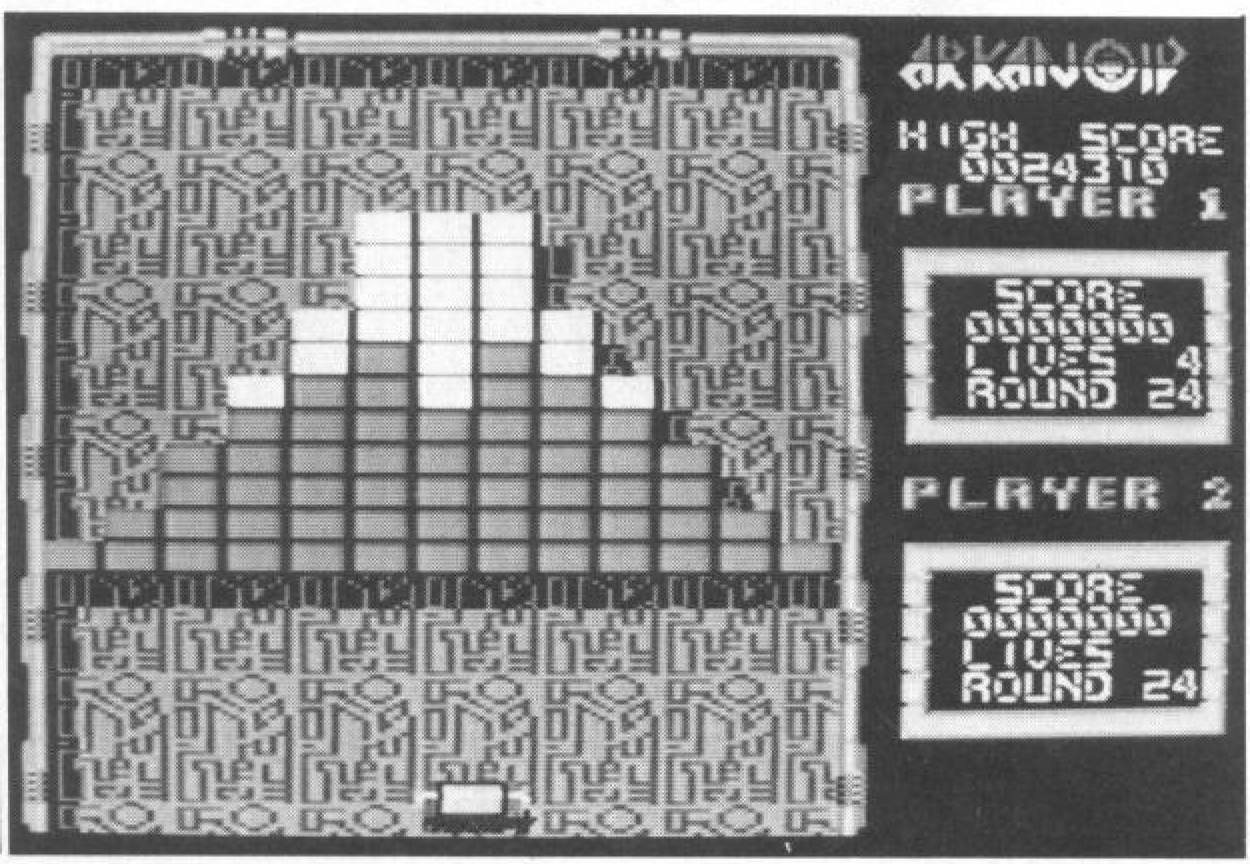


So what makes Imagine's glorified version of Breakout **a better buy than Gremlin's?** Arkanoid **is a lot prettier than** Krakout, **it also sounds better – and it's a quid cheaper. But that's not all –** Arkanoid **has that undefinable something that** Krakout **lacks.** Arkanoid **has less screens, but is more playable than** Krakout **– more so when using the Neos mouse. If you have access to a such a mouse, I thoroughly recommend** Arkanoid **– for the simple reason that it's simply gorgeous playing with it.**

If the ball goes past the bat a life is lost, although extra lives can be earned at regular point intervals – or by collecting a capsule marked with 'P'.



This is a magnificent conversion, faithfully capturing the feel, atmosphere, look and sound of the Taito original. Although Arkanoid **is basically** Breakout **with a few extra bits, it's still extremely playable, incredibly frustrating, wonderfully frenetic and immensely addictive. The option screen is really useful and allows you to use a mouse – the proper way to play this type of game. The joystick control feels good and works extremely well, especially when the ball is bouncing around at an enormous speed. If you like playing the arcade game I recommend that you buy this, the definitive version of** Arkanoid.



PRESENTATION 90%
Comprehensive options, good attract mode and an adequate title screen.

GRAPHICS 80%
Attractive backdrops and sprites, almost identical to the arcade original.

SOUND 96%
Brilliant title tune and superb sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 84%
Instantly playable and rewarding.

LASTABILITY 70%
Lacking variety, but very playable and compulsive.

VALUE 65%
Highly polished, but expensive for what it offers.

OVERALL 80%
A well above average conversion of an addictive and challenging arcade game.

ZZAP! TEST

LEVIATHAN

English Software, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Drifting aimlessly in the depths of space lie huge, mysterious landscapes inhabited by hordes of aliens intent upon your destruction. Your aim, quite simply, is their total annihilation.

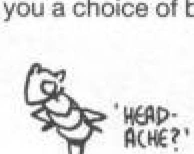
The landscapes scroll diagonally across a static star-field with your fighter appearing on screen in perspective to the background. The ship can roll left and right, loop and spin to face in the opposite direction, and rise and descend with respect to the landscape.

Your fighter comes equipped with forward firing lasers and three smart bombs. Points are scored by destroying alien craft and specific ground features, many of which return your fire as you fly past. Elimination of all enemy ships in any zone earns the player the option to either increase the skill level or transfer to the next zone.

Large tracts of open space lie between the sections of landscape and are well defended by alien attack craft. Refuelling is possible during this flight, and is accomplished by shooting fuel-cubes which spin toward you.

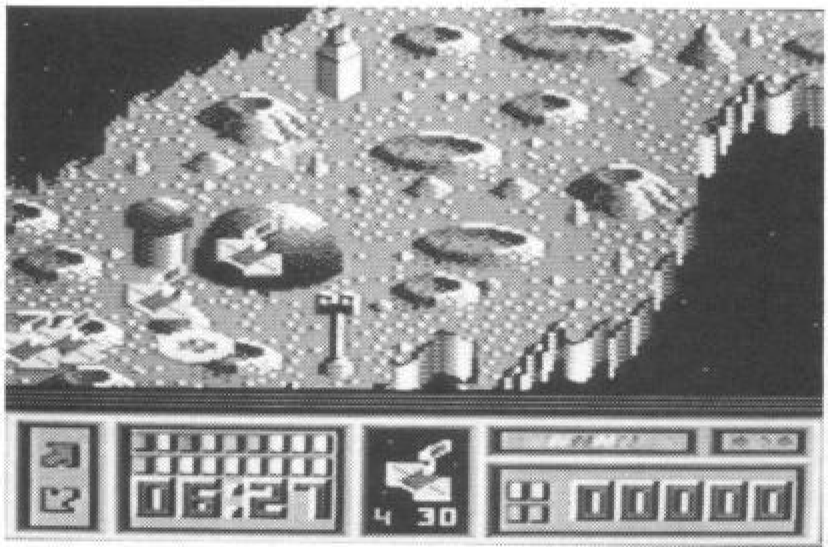
A panel below the main screen shows your height above the landscape, the time left in which to complete the level, smart bombs remaining, direction of alien attack waves, and your current score.

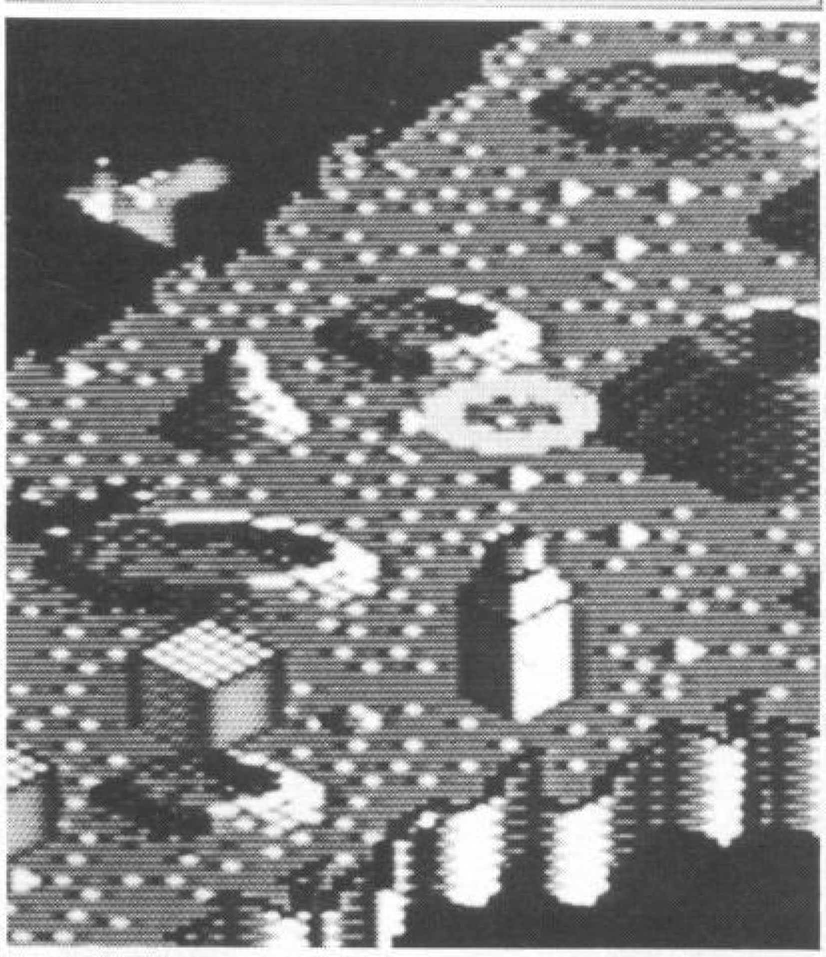
There are three separate landscape zones – a moonscape, which is loaded as part of the main program, a cityscape and a 'Greekscape', containing Grecian columns and statues. The latter two sections are loaded separately and may be called up at any time, giving you a choice of backdrops.

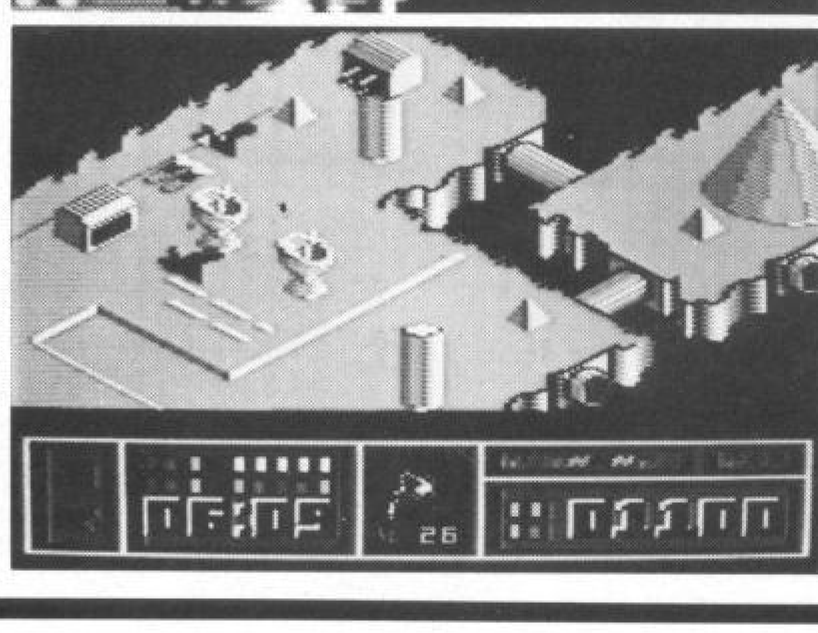




Leviathan **looks very impressive, but when you start playing it the illusions of grandeur are shattered. The control method must be one of the worst ever used on a shoot 'em up. It's so bad that it makes the ship completely unwieldy, and renders the game virtually unplayable. More time is spent concentrating on which joystick directions to use to avoid the rapidly approaching aliens than shooting them. The game structure is nothing special either – all you have to do is shoot a defined number of aliens to progress to the next, very similar level. And this merely adds boredom to the frustration . . .**









These days, shoot 'em ups usually have some original features to compensate for the tired gameplay. Leviathan **does, but in attempting to be innovative with a control method, English have destroyed the playability. The fighter is far too awkward to control – it wobbles to and fro so much that I was more often than not left puzzled as to which direction I was travelling in. This, combined with the annoying use of shadow, lets the whole game down. The only part that really appeals to me is the attract mode on the title screen – apart from that, this is another run of the mill shoot 'em up.**



Leviathan **is far from the best scrolling shoot 'em up available. The control method is awful, allowing no fine adjustment of course, and leaving no room for error. Using the fire button to access further movement commands only leads to further confusion. It's also possible to shoot at a ground target, apparently miss, and then run straight into it without changing course! The backdrops are of a reasonable standard, but in many cases the passing of the ship behind ground objects is rather messy and looks very transparent.** Leviathan, **I'm afraid, is neither huge nor indeed very awesome.**

PRESENTATION 68%
Adequate on-screen, but somewhat pointless multi-load system and poor use of joystick.

GRAPHICS 80%
Superbly drawn backdrops and sprites.

SOUND 53%
Bland title tune and unsuitable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 54%
Awkward and incredibly frustrating, mainly due to the needlessly over-complicated controls.

LASTABILITY 39%
Not much in the way of varied or absorbing shoot 'em up action.

VALUE 31%
Expensive for a glorified, and in many ways inferior version of Zaxxon.

OVERALL 41%
A sadly uninspiring variant of an ageing shoot 'em up. Temptingly attractive, but bitterly disappointing.


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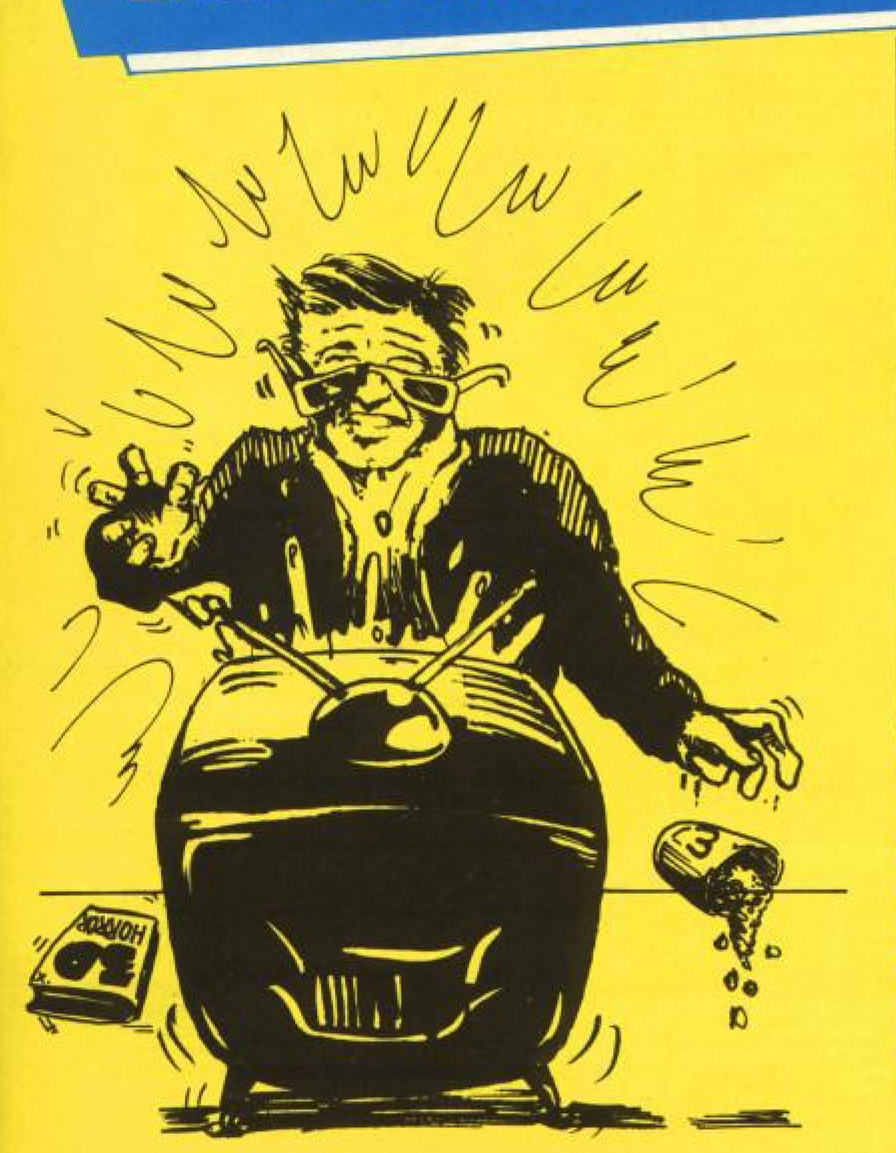
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ZZAP! T Shirts and Caps for 10 runners up!



I'll never forget the first 3D film I saw on the big screen – it featured a very large shark which appeared to leap out of the screen straight at me. Of course I was ever so young at the time, and very impressionable – I hid in the broom cupboard for days . . .

Anyway I digress. The powers that be at ZZAP! Towers have decided to be everso generous and give a new 1541 disk drive to two readers. No less than 10 consolation prizes of a ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap set are also on offer. Of course they're not entirely free: you will have to do a bit of work to earn one of these super prizes, and this is where my obscure reference to the subject of 3D comes in. What you must do is design a 3D map of any existing Commodore game.

If you look on page 58 of this issue you'll find a 3D map of the fourth level of *Escape from Singe's Castle*. Study it carefully – it should help you design your 3D masterpiece. A fair old bit of brainpower is called for, and I'm an understanding fellow. You can have a couple of months to complete the task.

Don't actually send in a 3D object – draw out your map so I can have lots of fun with scissors and glue. If the winning maps are good enough we'll pack off the prizes and print the maps in a future issue of ZZAP! so everyone else can share in the product of your genius.

Once you have finished your cartographical creation, drawn it out on paper and tested it's viability as a 'build it yourself' project, fill in the form below, remembering to include your T-Shirt size, and send whizz everything off to **3D ZZAP!, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive by the 14th of May.

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STRANGE TRANSFORMATIONS

This month, our ex-resident corpulent techno-tea boy Gary Liddon logs on. But can the net take the strain? . . .

This month sees yet more of the usual thrills and spills provided by that most interesting of entertainment media, the Compunet Demo. Yes folks, you guessed it, even more of those adrenalin provoking proggies with all the fave features that everybody just loves to see. And this month we've got them all – bit map screens, Rob Hubbard music and sprites in the border scrolling messages!

Actually, despite this youthful cynicism, things are getting a bit better in the whacky world of demodom. The most prolific demo factory are the relatively new Mean Team, who are now showing some imagination in their work. And very quick they are too – it seems that a game only has to be in the shops for a few pico seconds before the Mean Team have hacked out the music and transferred it into demoness. MT productions worth looking at include SID&VIC'S FIRST, BREAKTHRU MT, MUTANTS MT, and IT'S WAR MT – all these, and more, can be found at the Mean Team's DIR at 220883.

'Pick of the Pops' this month is the Judge's latest (and probably greatest) file of fun, CRAZY SAMPLE II. Odd it is indeed, with the demo including two new, original pieces of music by a foreign chap called Red. Though quite twee, the music is certainly listenable – but it's the graphic accompaniment that makes it all worthwhile. Mr Headroom struts his funky stuff in time to one of the tunes – and highly amusing it is too. I'm not so sure about the scrolling message written in a strange blend of German and English, but overall it's a worthwhile download and can be found at DEM6 (or thereabout).

If you've got a bit of time on your hands, the Highlander's ANIMATOR is worth picking up for the £2.50 it costs. This package is capable of producing fast and zappy text frame animation by scaling, rotating and animating any image you create. I say it's worthwhile if you've got a bit of time, as creation of an animated sequence can be quite a chore – the machine needs a while to create each frame, but the end results usually make the experience worthwhile. It's possible to save or load your sequences out to disk or tape, and if you shell out another quid for an extra utility entitled ANI DEMO MAKER, it's even possible to create standalone demos. GOTO 216895 for a look.

Another demo that came to our attention and held it very well is XESS2 REWIND at DEM6. It's the computer equivalent of 'Stars On 45', with about 20 teeny snippets of some 64 games along with a few of their soundtracks as rendered on Electrosound. Oh No! Not Leccysound, I hear you shout . . . but they are very good so have a look and DNLD . . .

And now . . . it's competition time, where you can win fame, fortune and glamour. *Delta*, Thalamus' next release, includes an interesting loading system with a DIY 'mix it yourself' Rob H tune. Hopefully by the time you read this I'll have set up a DIR with a totally unprotected copy of the music and details of how to interact with it. There'll also be some example source code of Laser Genius/Machine Lightning variety. The best implementation will get fame, fortune, love and glory. Who could ask for more? . . . only someone very greedy, that's who.

Talk to you some other time – but in the meantime . . . have lots of jolly nice fun. Bye . . .

GARY LIDDON

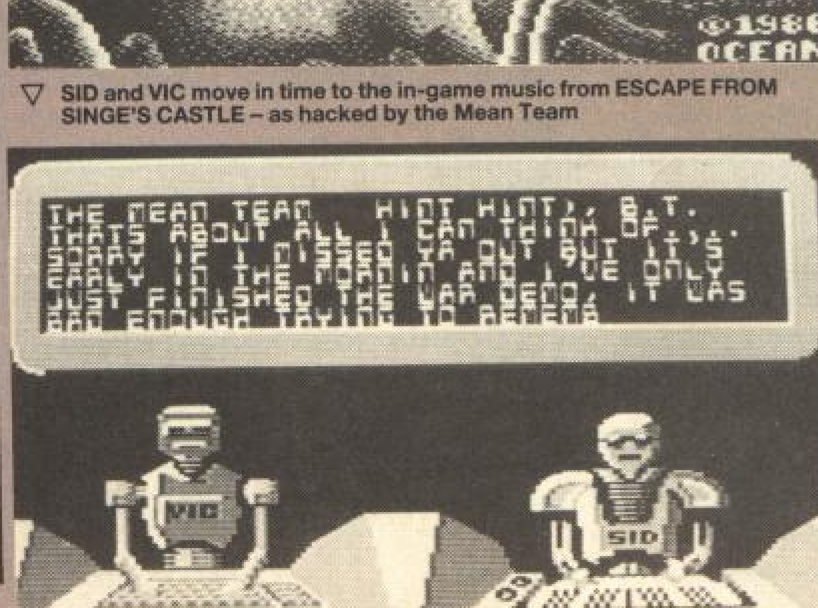


△ Max struts his funky stuff . . . in The Judges's CRAZY SAMPLE II

▽ The Mutants loading screen forms an integral part of the Mean Team's MUTANTS MT demo



▽ SID and VIC move in time to the in-game music from ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE – as hacked by the Mean Team





GOTO RADIX and download RADIX PICTURE SHOW, featuring these three delightful pictures . . . as drawn by DOKK





A DAY AT THE SEASIDE



A Tuesday in out-of-season Blackpool is pretty much like a Tuesday in any other large British town. A few shoppers scurry along windswept streets, traffic wardens prowl the kerbs and litter blows along the pavement. Not really a place to visit. But this Tuesday was a bit special – it was the first day of an Amusements Exhibition, and the Winter Gardens complex was packed to capacity with high-tech entertainment hardware.

Gary Penn, Graeme Kidd and Ben Stone spent the day amongst the 'Amusement With Prizes' machines (Fruit Machines – for the uninitiated), side-stepped the candyfloss machines and giant inflatable kiddie castles, tried to ignore the legion of jukeboxes and got to grips with the latest arcade games. Ben's eyes widened as he realised that everything was set on free play – he'd brought a stack of 10 pees all the way from Ludlow !

It was a trade exhibition, so the talk was all about margins, multiple-site operations and the latest boards from the Orient. There were more business suits than you would ever expect to see at a computer show – and the sight of a middle-aged businessman whooping with glee as he whizzed round in the cockpit of Konami's Le Mans driving simulator for the third time was strange indeed. Especially as there was a longish queue of besuited executives fighting and doing shady deals to procure the next turn . . . "Let me through, I'm a reviewer" cried Gary Penn, intimidating all and sundry with his spiky haircut . . .



The Dunlop advertisement encountered a little way into the race. Looks like Mr Penn's going to be recalled to the Pits before long . . .



Back to the Pits, with mechanics standing round in designer overalls. A chance to view the course map

WEC LE MANS 24

Konami's officially endorsed racing simulation game pits you against the gruelling course of the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race. Seated in a large cockpit, part of a fibreglass mock-up of a Porsche, and surrounded by dials and gauges, you are equipped with a gearshift (low or high), a brake and accelerator and, of course, a steering wheel. Press the start button and the race begins . . .

Le Mans is an exhilarating experience – part driving game, part fairground ride. As the car on the screen takes the video corners the whole cockpit swings, spinning round on its axis and throwing you around in the driving seat. Leave the tarmac or nudge the kerb and the ride gets distinctly bumpy. There are limits to realism, however . . . should you crash the car, the angle of view on the screen changes and you see the car on screen, spinning through the air. The game doesn't actually throw you out of the cockpit – safety considerations mean that totalling the video Porsche only leads to a succession of violent judders and lurches. There is also a smaller, more cramped version of the cockpit which doesn't throw its passenger about quite as much.

Each lap has to be completed in a qualifying time, or you are recalled to the Pits and the game ends. Keep up with the pace however, and before too long night begins to fall and you're driving beneath an impressive scrolling skyscape, lit by the rays of the setting sun. Then the lights on the side of the track come on and your night driving skills are put to the test . . .

OUT RUN

Sega offer four versions of their new driving game – the basic machine features a brake, accelerator and fixed steering wheel as well as the high/low gearshift; the next model up features a steering column that judders and shakes when you leave the road or crash, and then there are two cockpit versions which have you sitting in a car that judders and leans as you take corners or crash. In the cockpit versions, stereo speakers mounted behind the driver blast out music and sound effects, enhancing the already excellent illusion of road racing.

At the start of *Out Run* you can choose the musical accompaniment you'd like to have as you zoom along the scrolling roadway. Once the radio's been tuned it's on to the start and away. The roadway curves and dips as you drive a hot street machine along the course – the 3D scrolling is wonderful. Trucks and cars have to be avoided, and every so often the track forks – there are five finishing points and it's up to you to choose a route. Depending on the choices made at junctions, you can be involved in a harrowing race through a rock canyon, travel under a series of rocky bridges or cross the desert delights of sandy dunes.

Out Run is highly polished – the music is excellent, and a host of neat touches have been added. Apart from the impressive



After a crash, the car is replaced on the road and it's time to go for a standing start . . .

graphics and sound, attention has been paid to every little detail: for instance you have a female passenger in the car who isn't averse to a bit of back-seat driving – she wags an admonishing finger as you both sit on the road after a crash. The basic game is neat, the mid-range version adds an extra dimension of realism with the feedback from the steering column and the complete cockpit implementation is a thrilling experience. While the latest **Konami** race game offers a neat driving simulation and provides a different 'camera view' when you crash, *Out Run* has the edge in both game-play and presentation when the two cockpit games are compared. Somehow the gyrations of the *Le Mans* module are disorientating rather than realistic; *Out Run*'s moving cockpit is more believable, and the added touches make the whole package more atmospheric.



As you shift gear, smoke billows from the rear tyres and at 98km/hr the palm trees that flank the road are a blur as far as our camera is concerned

NIGHT STOCKER

The front of your techno motor looks a bit battered as you confront another houseful of snipers at the end of a level. Fortunately, the crystal collector is unharmed



Bally Sente are also offering a new driving game – but one with a difference. Dispensing with the accelerator and brake pedal, **Bally** have added a gun! You drive over a steadily scrolling landscape, steering with one hand and shooting from the hip with the other.

The front of the car is fitted with a claw-like device that's used to pick up crystals as you drive over them. Green crystals add ten shots to your pistol's magazine, while the blue crystals found on the higher levels are good for an additional 50 shots.

Hurtling through the hazardous terrain, avoiding mines and craters – the front of the car gets to look more and more battered with each successive collision, and if you're really careless and hit a mine with the crystal-collector it's impossible to collect extra ammunition. Red crystals, when found, go some way to repairing the damage – but if the collector's out of action . . .

A veritable host of flying, bouncing and crawling meanies populate the game, including Idors, Dyads, Drosians, Cruisers, Bouncers, Speeders . . . and so on. Mutant bugs flit across the screen on the first level, occasionally attempting to sit on the front of the car and inflict damage by nibbling away at the paintwork. Quick thinking and an itchy trigger finger are required to bring their destructive meal to a close.

At the end of every perilous section of terrain the car draws to a halt outside a strange, futuristic building. Snipers pop up in the windows and it's up to you to blow them away before the car sustains even more front-end damage.

Night Stocker is an unusual game that combines the elements of shoot 'em up with a fairly straightforward driving game – the fact that you have to do two things at once makes it frustratingly addictive, well worth a few 10 pees.

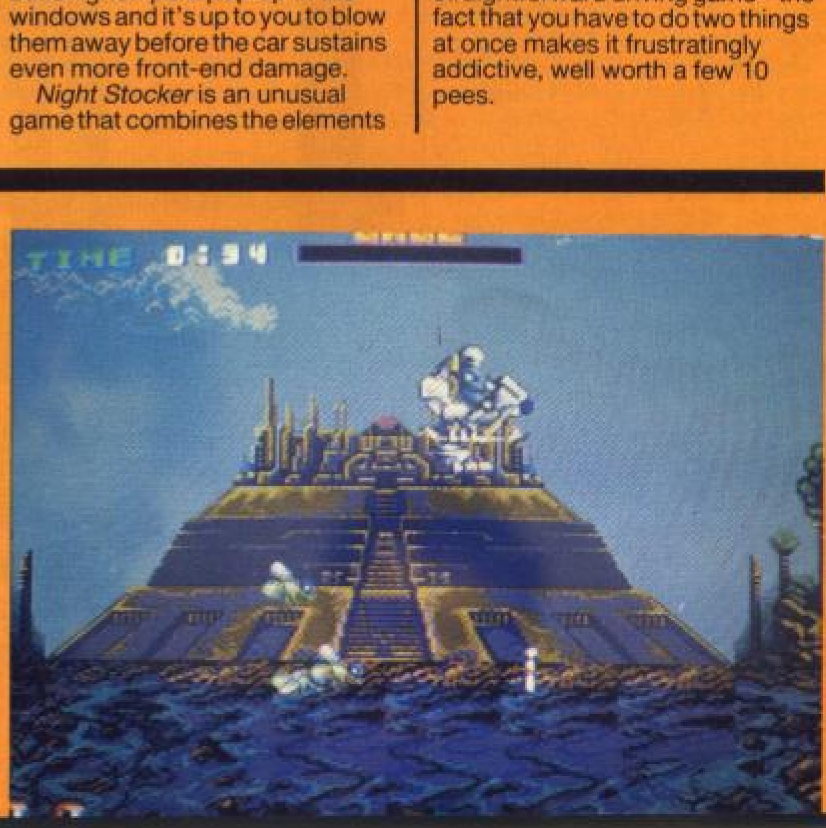
SOLDIER OF LIGHT

Straightforward shoot 'em ups were in abundance at the show. **Taito**'s *Soldier Of Light* casts you in the role of a futuristic space hero by the name of Xain – a sort of *Green Beret* in space, who has to put up with a few *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*-type problems.

Five planets are under attack from an evil invading army, and your first task is to decide which planet to save first. The five worlds are all fundamentally different – the fighting takes place in a jungle populated by evil flying insectoids on one planet, underwater on another, and against a dangerous volcanic landscape on a third.

Having selected a planet to clean up, Xain is transported there in a space craft and deposited at

Poor old Xain – he's just lost a life doing battle with the enemy HQ at the end of a planet





Fighting through the jungle scenery, Xain pauses in amazement – there are no marauding meanies on the screen with him!

the start of a horizontally scrolling landscape. The shuttle takes off and you're on your own. Dressed in a special suit, the hero can perform a two-stage jump, kneel, lie flat or scamper to the right. The suit's protective powers sustain up to sixteen hits from the mobile creatures that lurk on the planets but can only resist a single shot fired by one of the enemy troopers – so they have to be disposed of promptly if lives are not to be lost.

Extra firepower can be collected, and comes in handy when you confront the enemy base at the end of each landscape. Destroy the evil invaders' emplacement, and the planet is liberated – so it's back into the shuttle and off to another warzone.

Overall, *Soldier of Light* is an attractive, if rather unoriginal shoot 'em up. It should prove moderately entertaining if not totally gripping.

SIDE ARMS

This is another shoot 'em up in the classic mould of *Salamander*, featuring a couple of superhero soldiers pitting their wits against an evil warlord and his minions.

Starting out solo, you blast away furiously at the flying horrors that enter from the right of the screen – and every so often a despatched alien leaves a pod behind. Collecting a pod conveys extra equipment or alters the game-play subtly. An orbiting defence system and extra firepower may be acquired, the speed of the scroll modified or the effect of your weapon altered. Collecting one specific object allows a composite soldier to be created, as two characters merge 'Transformers style' to form a super-powerful fighting machine.

At the end of each Stage a particularly powerful enemy machine has to be destroyed before the heroes can continue their quest to defeat the Bad Guy.

Side Arms is an unoriginal, but attractive and fairly playable addition to the already crowded range of *Salamander*-inspired shoot 'em ups.

The orbiting orbs are a mere blur as the camera shutter records the two space heroes in their unified form





GRYZOR



The hunky hero fights in open country. He's so butch, he doesn't even need a shirt . .

One of two brand new **Konami** games on show, *Gryzor* is a hectic shoot 'em up in which you star as a heroic one-man army. Starting in the great outdoors armed with little more than a high-power laser rifle, the bare-chested wonder soldier leaps from ledge to ledge blasting enemy soldiers, occasionally leaping on their heads from above for a bit of variety.

Once through the verdant horizontally scrolling countryside, the hero gains access to an underground complex – a grey maze. Here, the action is viewed from above and behind your on-screen persona. Penetrating the maze is made a little tricky by electrified fences which have been constructed to guard the corridor junctions. Rapid blasting of the control panels at the 'back' of the screen is called for – but to make life a bit more difficult, guards are teleported into the trouble spot and have to be taken out too. Every so often automatic defence systems are encountered, and rolling mines trundle towards you.

Fight through the complex and eventually you come out on the other side – it's back in the open with more enemy soldiers to send packing.

Adequate fodder for shoot 'em up fans, *Gryzor* requires you to blast everything in sight without respite or responsibility.

The Castle in DARKMIST

Taito have entered the shoot 'em up market with a game full of mystery and magic. It combines elements of the vertically scrolling *Commando*, with the multi-directional scrolling of a *Gauntlet*-style combat adventure. *Darkmist* features a Samurai-like central character on a quest to collect treasure and magic tokens, fighting through seven action-packed levels.

Out in the open countryside marauding minions have to be dealt with, including cloaked figures and strange mud monsters that appear from the very ground itself – chop a mud monster with your sword and it turns into a couple of mini mud monsters that both have to be killed before the threat is diminished. The filthy creatures occasionally fling mud at the Samurai, forming more mini mud monsters in the process – and remember: if enough mud is thrown, some of it will stick.

Dungeons, in the form of castles and towns, are encountered at the

THE CASTLE IN DARKMIST



end of the vertically scrolling sections. They offer an opportunity to recharge energy, as well as offering more treasure for the money-hungry hero to collect. Further unpleasant beings have to be disposed of, including pugilistic skeletons and magical swords that whirl in mid-air with no visible means of support. Single-direction doorways link the chambers in the maze sections, and teleporter pads zip you from location to location – life can get a bit confusing once you're inside a building.

Overall, the *Darkmist* machine didn't keep the team captivated for very long – it's a little too derivative, and the action's a bit slow. Although the game is an adequate development of the *Commando* theme, it doesn't quite come off.



With sword in hand, the valiant Samurai hero plods towards a magic portal at the top of the screen

720°

Skate City is the setting for this latest **Atari** arcade offering – and as the name might suggest to skateboard freaks, it's a game that tests your skills at riding a board.

The city streets are full of mean hazards, including bone-crushing vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, Frisbee throwers and pools of water. To compensate for this, most of the surfaces are ideal for a bit of skateboarding, and points are collected for executing manoeuvres that take advantage of the city scenery.

Each of the game's twenty levels contains four skateboard parks, in which special ramps have been constructed for the amusement of skateboard riders. To enter a park, you need a ticket, and to buy a ticket you must amass enough points by performing tricks in the street. Every so often the ominous message 'Skate or Die' flashes onto the screen – if you can't get into a skateboard park pretty sharpish, death comes in the form of an amorphous cloud that pursues you relentlessly.

Once entry has been gained to a park, tricks and stunts can be performed on the ramps – which is where the real skateboarding skill comes into play. Medals are awarded – Gold, Silver and Bronze – and more importantly, cash prizes are offered. Not real money, of course – just dollars to add to your scoremeter.

Oh, and 720° is the name given to a particularly tricky manoeuvre performed on a board – a leap into the air precedes a spin through 720° before solid ground is touched again.

Certainly worth playing for the experience! An easy game to get addicted to as the skateboard is a delight to control and the action is tricky but very rewarding.

The skateboard freak finds the park is closed. Reflections from the pretty lights that festooned the Winter Gardens appear on the screen . .



ROCK 'N' RAGE



In the Middle Ages, where men were men and the insects deadly. Whenever you find a giant blue beefburger in the game, walk into it and a mirage of the kidnapped vocalist appears – you might be able to see her fading away to the right of the singer. What she calls out is best left to you to hear for yourself . . .

The most innovative game scenario at the exhibition was to be found on the **Konami** stand. A one or two player *Gauntlet* variant, *Rock 'n' Rage*, blasted out music and tempted visitors to the show to embark on a quest to rescue a female vocalist . . .

There you were, playing away in a band in front of an appreciative audience when suddenly this huge hand appeared from the sky and snatched the singer off stage. What option did you have but to follow and get her back?

After a brief journey through the space/time continuum you find yourself transported to Ancient Egypt and doing battle with rampant mummies generated by Sphynx dotted around the landscape. Grenade-hurling locals populate the sandy desert and just to add variety, 'Creatures From The Black Lagoon' hurl killer fish at you from the deep. Giant boulders have a habit of hopping around at random, driven by a mysterious force.

The guitarist can use his 'axe' (of the six-stringed variety) to club the baddies, while the lead singer, should he join the game, fights with a mike-stand. But there's more – musical notes, along with cans of Coke, hamburgers and other musical paraphenalia are scattered around the scenes or appear when a mutant mummy is killed. Food and other goodies recharge energy or earn points, but collecting a note gets you with the beat. With the beat? As long as you have a note in your possession you can fire music at the attacking minions – little notes emanate from your body, expanding as they travel across the screen and rendering instant death to any sentient creature they hit. There's fodder for the moral majority!

There are four historic levels to the game: Ancient Egypt, the Middle Ages, France, and Rome. The final sequence takes place in modern-day USA, and if you can cope with the muggers the band is reunited when the girlie is rescued and you can get back on stage to wow the audience.

After romping through a landscape that forms the start of each level, you enter a building where an evil creature lurks, blocking the portal to the next level. This being has to be destroyed with multiple hits before progress can be made, and fights back rather more powerfully than the minions encountered earlier.

Rock 'n' Rage is played to a suitably loud rock music accompaniment that changes as to progress into the game. It follows on very neatly from the *Gauntlet* theme – well worth a handful of coins, if only to experience the bizarre scenario!

OTHER SCREENS SEEN . . .

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Taito's *Bubble Bobble* is a multi-screen platform game that features a cute little dragon creature.

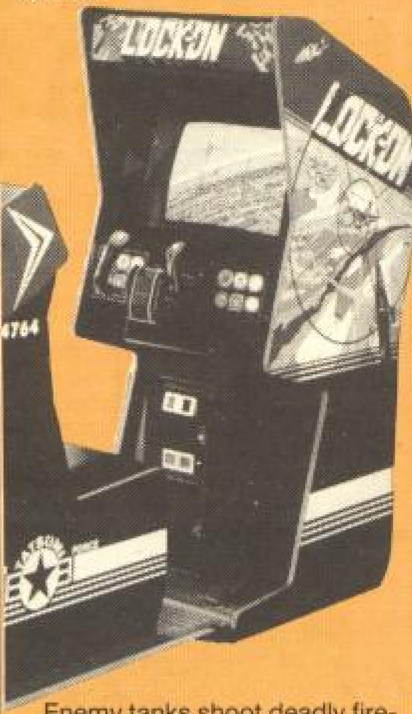
Controlling the dragon that can leap around from platform to platform and blow giant bubbles, the aim is to clear the successive screens of rampaging dwarves. Blowing a bubble at a dwarf encapsulates it, and the bubble containing your foe floats towards the top of the screen. Head-butt the bubble and it burst, magically converting its contents into a piece of fruit! Eat the fruit for bonus points before moving on to blow bubbles at the next mutant minion.

Other bubbles drift around the screen and they contain fire, thunder or water – burst them to release their contents and watch those little dwarves squirm . . . Each screen is played against a time limit, and bursting one of the pink pods that drift into the playzone speeds up the pace.

"Forever blowing bubbles . . . " A deceptively simple game that proves very addictive and lots of fun to play. A high cuteness factor combined with a neat and bouncy tune that would fit with a children's TV show makes *Bubble Bobble* very compelling. Invest a few coins as soon as you can . . .

LOCK-ON

Tatsumi offer you the chance to pilot an advanced fighter jet in *Lock-On*, doing battle with enemy aircraft and blasting ground installations. The centre of the screen features a grid sight used to target your air-to-air missiles – once they're locked on (indicated by yellow squares appearing) it's time to loose off the missiles and concentrate on blasting anything you can spot on the ground with laser cannon.



Enemy tanks shoot deadly fireballs into the air – and although the plane's advanced defence system offers a brief warning of impending danger, the ground-to-air missiles are very tricky to avoid.

A well-polished shoot 'em up that features excellent graphics but misses out on the game-play stakes. Weak, overall.





DARIUS

Another variation on the shoot 'em up theme comes from **Taito** in the form of *Darius* which is set in an underwater scenario and can be played by one or two players seated in a wide cockpit – to add realism, the seats vibrate! While the scenario and game-play of *Darius* is hardly innovative – once again you have to fight your way along a horizontally scrolling landscape dealing death to hordes of baddies, collecting items to boost firepower, strengthen shields and so on – the cunning aspect of the game is the way in which **Taito** have arranged three monitors side by side. The landscape scrolls smoothly along the bank of screens, and you can hardly see the joins!

Nothing amazingly innovative here, apart from the vibro-seat! Three-screen driving games have appeared before, but this is the first time a shoot 'em up has been given the triple-screen treatment. Good for a couple of plays to see how neatly the backdrops scroll from screen to screen, but likely to become uninspiring fairly quickly.

VICTORY ROAD

The follow-up to *Ikari Warriors* from **SNK** made an appearance, featuring the same joystick-cum-paddle controller. The game itself could best be described as *Ikari Warriors In Space* in which Thunder and Earthquakes can be harnessed to phase the enemy.

Great, if you liked *Ikari Warriors*, boring if you didn't – little more than a change of graphics supported by a change of scenario and scenery.

FIRETRAP

Soon to be arriving on home micros courtesy of **Electric Dreams**, this vertically scrolling rescue game has you scaling the outside walls of a burning skyscraper. Girls, doggies and businessmen hang out of the windows and have to be rescued – reach them and they parachute to safety while you continue your upward climb by waggling the joystick up and down to manipulate the suckers attached to your hands and feet. Tongues of fire lick out from windows, periodically hurling fireballs towards the ground. Sundry items of furniture fall from above as the panicked occupants of the building try to remove inflammable material from their offices and flats – get hit by a fireball or falling furniture and you're knocked off the wall and tumble to the ground.

Like any competent firefighter, you start the mission with a water gun which disposes of flames. Some of the burning windows reveal extra firefighting equipment when the flames are extinguished, and collecting this equipment allows the water cannon to be upgraded to the point where it shoots water in four directions.

A map records you progress towards the top of the building, and once it has been scaled and the girl who has taken refuge on the roof rescued, you can parachute down to a hero's welcome on the ground before setting off to put out yet another blazing inferno.

Not really State Of The Art as far as game-play goes – somehow it all looks and feels rather dated. A simple game that offers a moderate challenge.

DANGER ZONE

Budding anti-aircraft gunners in Blackpool weren't be able to resist the challenge offered by **Cinematronics** in *Danger Zone*. Gripping a double set of joysticks on the front of a swivelling, pivoting monitor mounted at head height, the aim of the game is to defend a ground installation from wave upon wave of enemy aircraft intent on damaging your base.

A radar scanner at the bottom of the screen warns of approaching squadrons and gripping the joysticks with the firebuttons firmly depressed you have to blast away at anything that moves in the sky. Formation of jet fighters materialise and if the planes aren't shot down in double-quick time they peel off from the formation and fly solo, leaving you to dodge and weave, moving the whole monitor assembly around as you attempt to shoot down the stragglers.

As each wave of attackers is destroyed, bonus points are awarded and then points are subtracted for the amount of damage they managed to inflict on the base you defend. Eventually the time comes when too much damage has been sustained and a nuclear explosion ends the game . . .

Fast and furious action, and a free physical work-out with every game as your biceps bulge with shifting the monitor around. Very little game here, however.





VIDEO FOOTBALL

And finally, football fans aren't going to be left out of the action in arcades this year. **Bally Sente**'s American footie game is set in the street where hazards rarely encountered on a regular pitch have to be dealt with, including cars, dogs, open manhole covers and the odd paperboy. *Street Football* is a game for one or two players and is controlled with trackerballs which move members of the three-man teams around the street while a firebutton controls catches and throws.

Soccer purists who prefer to manipulate a spherical ball with their feet and heads should get plenty of fun from **Taito**'s *Kick and Run*. Up to four players can compete against the computer or against each other, playing in teams of two. The game is played with joystick, firebutton and foot pedal – for that adding realism when shooting or fouling.

Fun games both.



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Julian Rignall

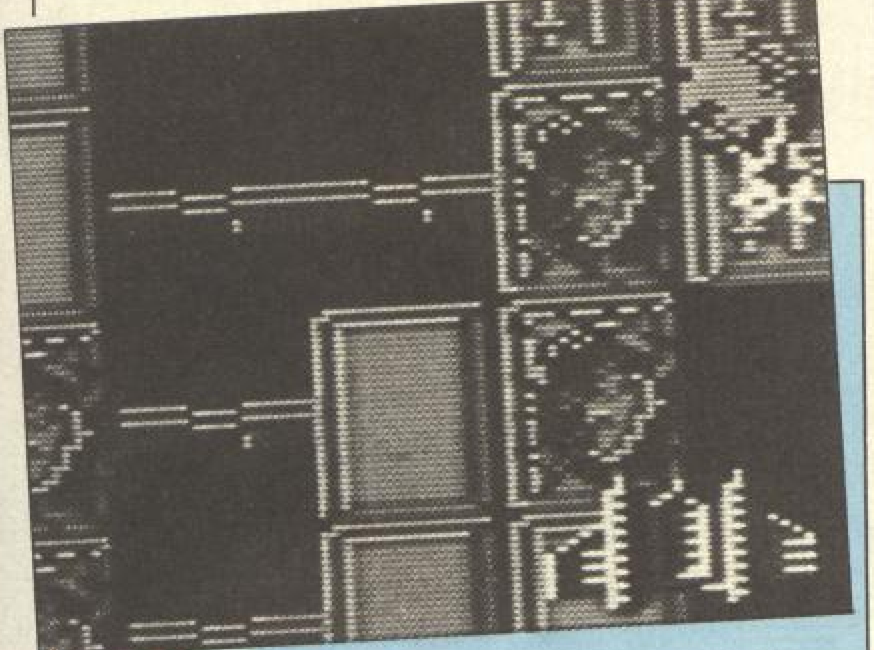


ZZAP! TIPS

Over the last few months there seems to have been a decline in the amount of solutions (or part solutions) to arcade adventures. Have people given up playing them? Can anyone claim to being proficient at playing *Heartland*, *Nosferatu*, *Firelord* or *Molecule Man*? You can! Well why don't you write in? There's a certainty that somebody out there needs YOUR help.

Every week there are a couple of letters asking where reset switches can be purchased. Perhaps you can help? If so, send in a sample of your product, the name and address of your company (and don't forget the price of the switch including postage and packaging).

Right, now on with the tips . . .



LIGHTFORCE (FTL)

No reset switch? Peeved that you couldn't enter last month's infinite lives POKEs? Fret no more. Ankle over to your Commodore, type in this top-hole Tim and Ian Fraser listing, insert your *Lightforce* cassette into the deck, RUN the listing and press play (phew). Go into the kitchen and make yourself a cuppa. Come back. Sit down, and the program should have loaded with unlimited lives. If it hasn't, repeat the process and check the listing properly because it works (the tea is optional second time around).

LIGHTFORCE LISTING

```
10 A=A+1
20 IF A=1 THEN GOSUB 40:LOAD
30 IF A=2 THEN GOSUB 50:SYS 16384
40 POKE 829,0:POKE 830,64:POKE 831,0:POKE
832,65:POKE 783,1:SYS 62828:RETURN
50 FOR A=16644 TO 16651:READ T:POKE
A,T:NEXT:RETURN
60 DATA 169, 173, 141, 155, 55, 76, 13, 8
```

SPACE HARRIER
(Elite)

Yes! Yet another selection of POKEs to make this disappointing arcade conversion look rather silly. Insert a rewound *Space Harrier* **cassette into your C2N, type** LOAD (RETURN) **and press play on tape. When the** READY **prompt appears type** POKE 1011,248:POKE 1012,252:RUN (RETURN). **The second part will now load.**

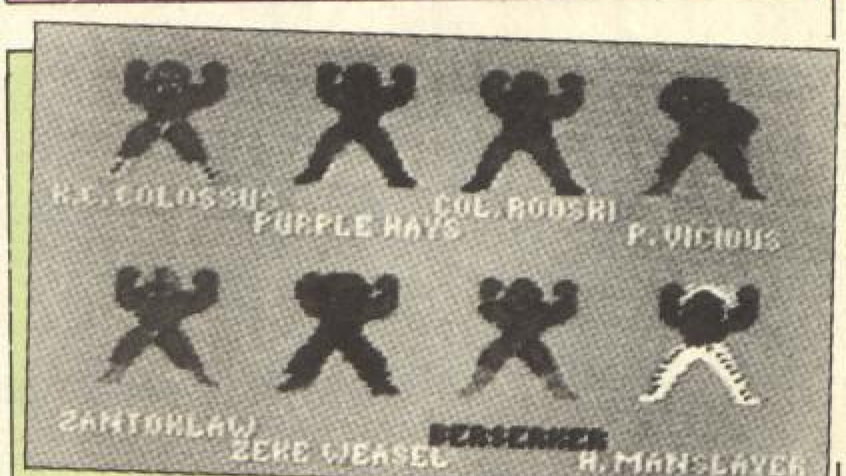
When the READY **prompt appears once again, type** POKE 816,167:POKE 817,2:POKE 2096,248:POKE 2097,252:SYS 2061 (RETURN) **to load the next part. When the computer resets, enter any of the following POKEs . . .**

POKE 4198,0-15
Changes the border colour
POKE 7650,0-15
Changes the background scenery colour
POKE 7673,0-15
Changes the main sprite's jacket and shoe colour
POKE 7797,0-15
Changes the main sprite's trouser colour
POKE 7655,0-15
Changes the tree and alien colours
POKE 7678,0-15
Gives some weird colour schemes!

NB: Colours
0 Black
1 White
2 Red
3 Cyan
4 Purple
5 Green
6 Blue
7 Yellow
8 Orange
9 Brown
10 Pink
11 Dark Grey
12 Medium Grey
13 Light Grey
14 Light Blue
15 Light Green

POKE 2375,234
Puts the game into 'weird mode' (trees fly around) and arrests the timer
POKE 14212,234
Speeds up the game (thoroughly recommended)
POKE 2213,255:POKE 8110,0
Gets rid of all poles
POKE 53277,3
To play *Liddon Harrier* **Ho! Ho!**

SYS 2128 **to restart the game with your selected changes. Thanks to** Marc Henry **of Pinner, Middx,** John Skinner **from Southend-on-Sea, and** Michael Willmott **from Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan.**



CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING (Epyx/US Gold)

Diz and Tec **of The Crackpots have spotted a neat tip. If your opponent gets you down on the floor, push forward on the joystick and press the fire button as fast as possible. Your energy zooms upwards and the opponent gets pushed off.**

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)

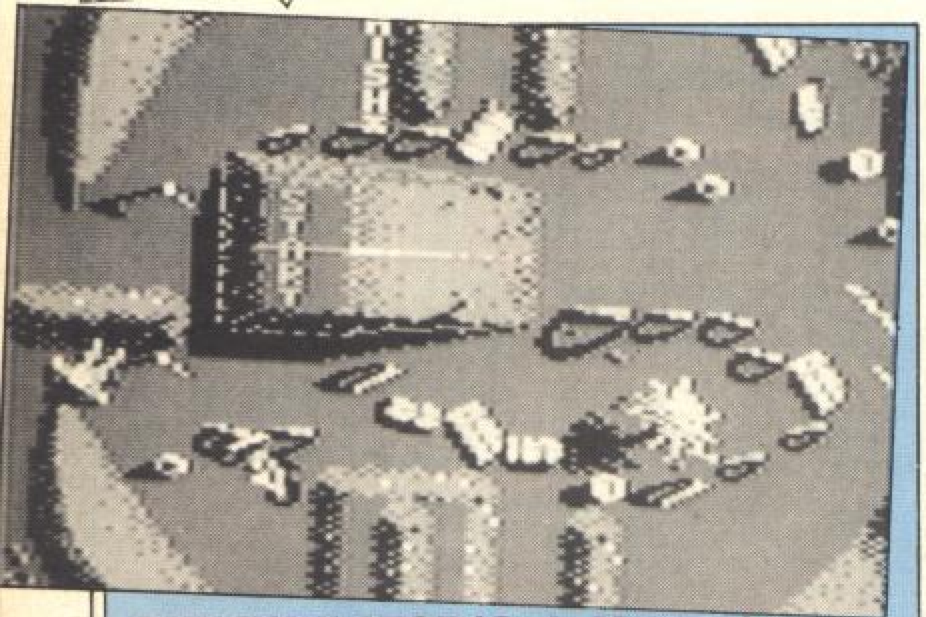
Good ol' Gazza P has completed 'Doom Dungeon' – and here's how he did it . . .

Move RIGHT, push FORWARD, press FIRE (TWICE), then move RIGHT. Press FIRE, move LEFT, press FIRE, pull BACK, move LEFT, then RIGHT, and RIGHT again to exit.

LAZY JONES (Terminal Software)

Although this is a bit ancient, it's still worth playing – if only to listen to the neat music. Anyroad, if you load the program, reset the computer and type POKE 4063,173 (RETURN) **followed by** SYS 2061 (RETURN) **you can play the game with unlimited lives. Thanks** Jim Blackler **from Lancaster.**





BMX SIMULATOR (Code Masters)

'We woz hakin' won day', **say** TRAXX **of Southampton,** 'wen we discovered these pretty MEGA POKEs. If u load ver game an' reset ver Commode u can enter these:'

POKE 5596,0-15
Changes the colour of Player One's clothes and bike frame
POKE 5604,0-15
Changes the colour of Player Two's clothes and bike frame
POKE 5612,0-15
Changes the colour of both players' accessories

SYS 4096 **to restart wiv ver selected changes.**

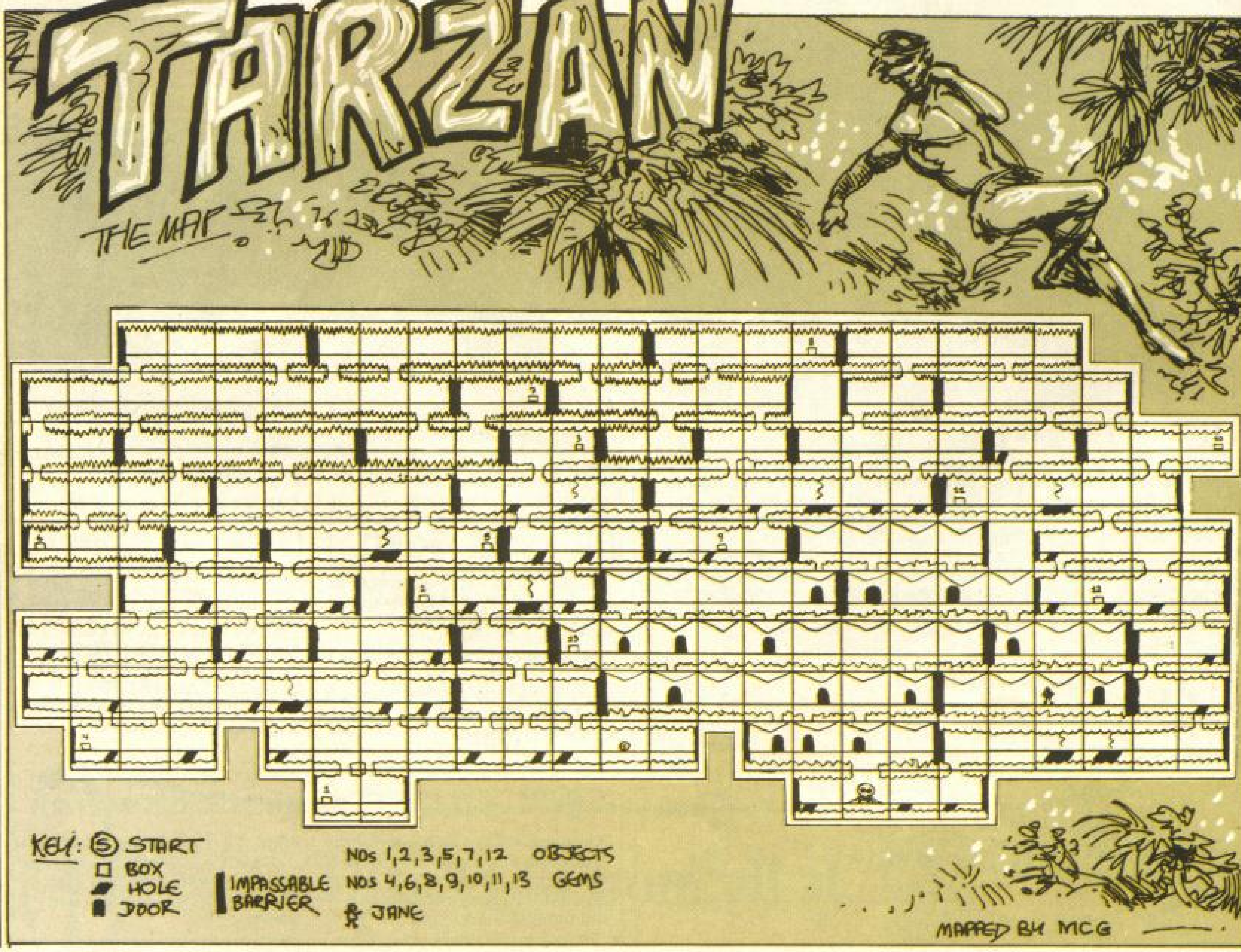
HEARTLAND

(Odin)

This 'cute' arcade adventure is a bit of a tough nut to crack, so here's a metaphorical sledgehammer to help you along. Type in the following listing . . .

```
HEARTLAND LISTING
10 FOR I=49152 TO 65535:READ X:IF X<>256
THEN POKE I,X:NEXT
20 END
30 DATA 162, 2, 189, 22, 192, 157, 238, 3, 202, 16,
247, 162, 12, 189, 26, 192, 157, 89, 64, 202
40 DATA 16, 247, 32, 0, 64, 96, 162, 3, 169, 234, 157,
34, 131, 202, 16, 248, 76, 0, 128, 256
```

Now RUN **it. Type** LOAD (RETURN) **and press play on tape. When** READY **appears, type** POKE 1008,192:RUN (RETURN) **to load the rest of the program with unlimited energy and time. Many thanks to** Tim and Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Middlesex.**



OUR VERY FIRST 3D MAP

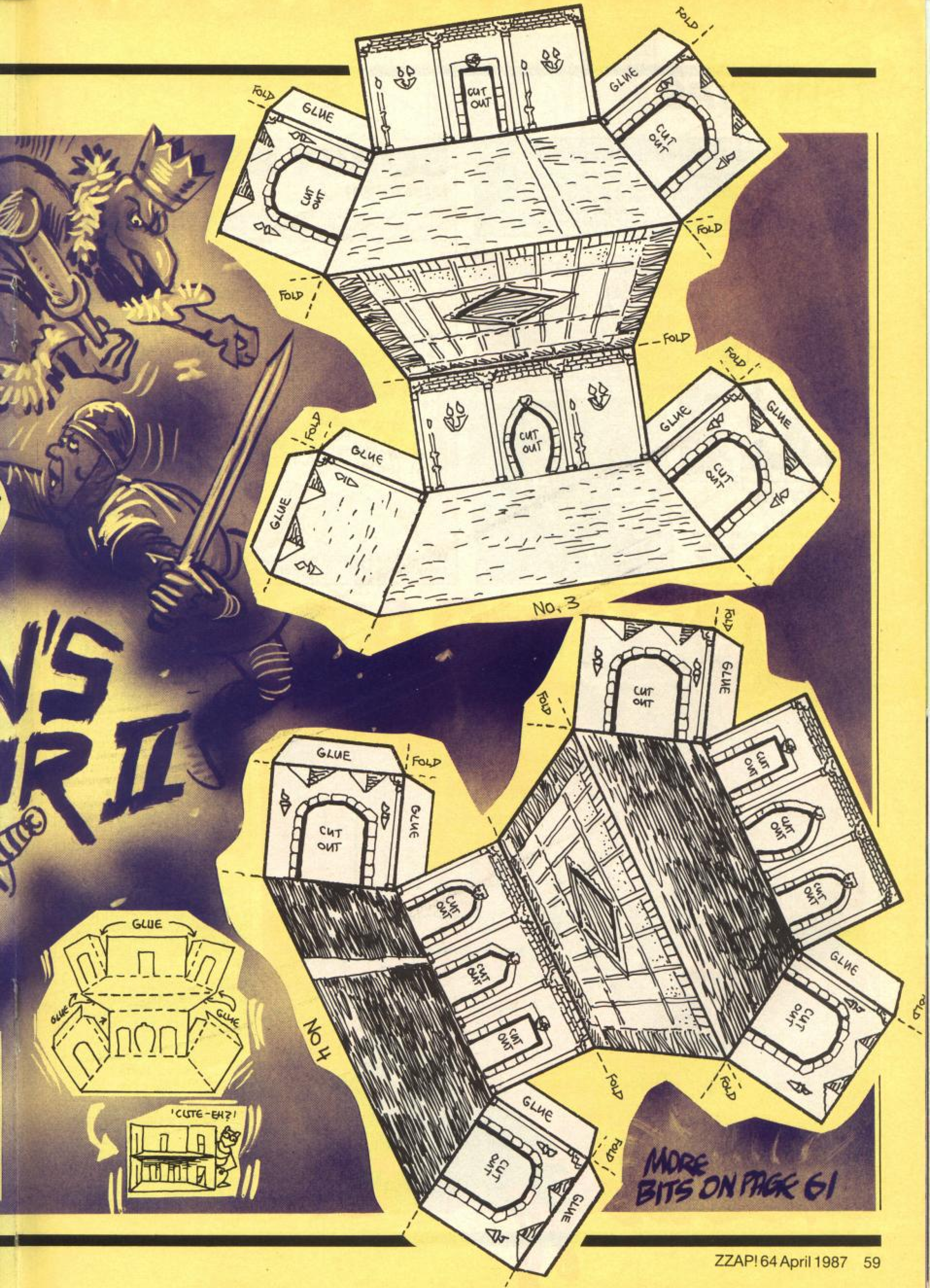
DRAGON LAI



TO ASSEMBLE YOUR 3D-MAP:

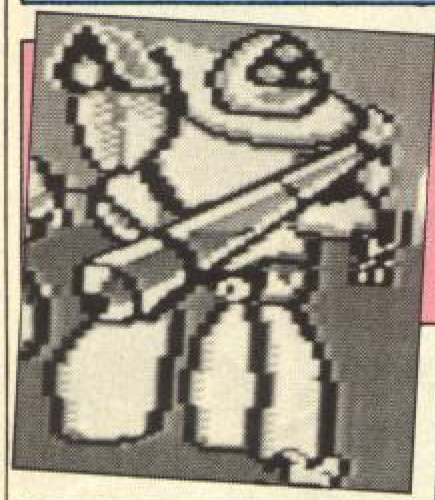
1. REMOVE PAGES AND GLUE TO A SHEET OF THIN CARD
2. CUT OUT THE SIX SHAPES
3. CUT OUT INSIDES OF DOORS
4. FOLD AS SHOWN ON RIGHT AND GLUE

MAP DEVISED BY GARY PENN !!


No. 3
No 4
GLUE
FOLD
CUT OUT
'CUTE-EH?!'
MORE BITS ON PAGE 61

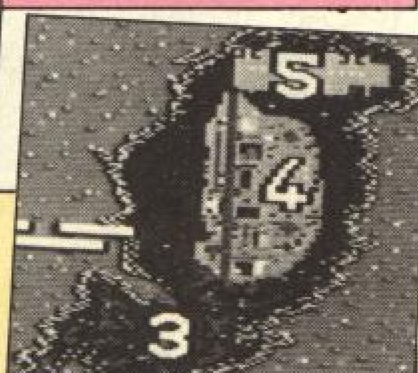
FUTURE KNIGHT (Gremlin Graphics)

Is Sir Randolph failing to complete his quest? If so, Paul Ballington **of Sunny Hill, Derby has some information. At the title screen stage, hold down keys** B UG87 **– all at the same time. The Border goes grey and** Future Knight **changes to** Future Cheats. **You now have infinite Randolphs at your disposal.**



SPACE HARRIER (Elite)

Stuart Robertson **of East Kilbride, Glasgow recommends you put an autofire joystick into port one when playing and switch it on. Why? Because it slows the game right down, making it easier to play. Hmmm . . .**



BREAKTHRU (US Gold)

Press F7 to pause the game and then F3 twice so you can listen to the title screen music while you play. Thank you Nipper . . .

BOBBY BEARING

(The Edge)

Fancy a bit of unlimited time to help round up all those lost relatives? Great, then read on. Pop a rewound *Bobby Bearing* **cassette into your C2N and type in the following . . .**

```
BOBBY BEARING LISTING
10 FOR A=49724 TO 49778:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS 49738
20 DATA 32, 60, 3, 169, 189, 141, 162, 155, 169, 173,
141, 184, 155, 96, 160, 152, 185, 107, 245
30 DATA 153, 255, 191, 185, 73, 248, 153, 56, 192,
136, 208, 241, 169, 107, 141, 189, 192, 169
40 DATA 194, 141, 190, 192, 32, 44, 247, 76, 0, 192,
169, 194, 141, 99, 4, 76, 173, 192
```

Now all you have to do is RUN **the listing and press play on tape. Many thanks to** Jim Blackler **of Lancaster.**



PARK PATROL (Firebird)

At the start of a game, jump from the boat onto the log directly opposite. A white bar appears at the bottom right of the screen and you can attempt log rolling (a la *World Games***) by tapping the joystick forward, letting the parkie slide down the log and repeating the process until the white bar runs down. If you complete the exercise you're awarded a bonus of 5000 points. That neat tip came to you courtesy of** Ian **and** Richard Yates **of Stourbridge, West Mids.**

PARK PATROL

I think that unlimited lives ruin this fabulous program, but if you think otherwise you might like to follow Jim Blackler**'s instructions . . .**

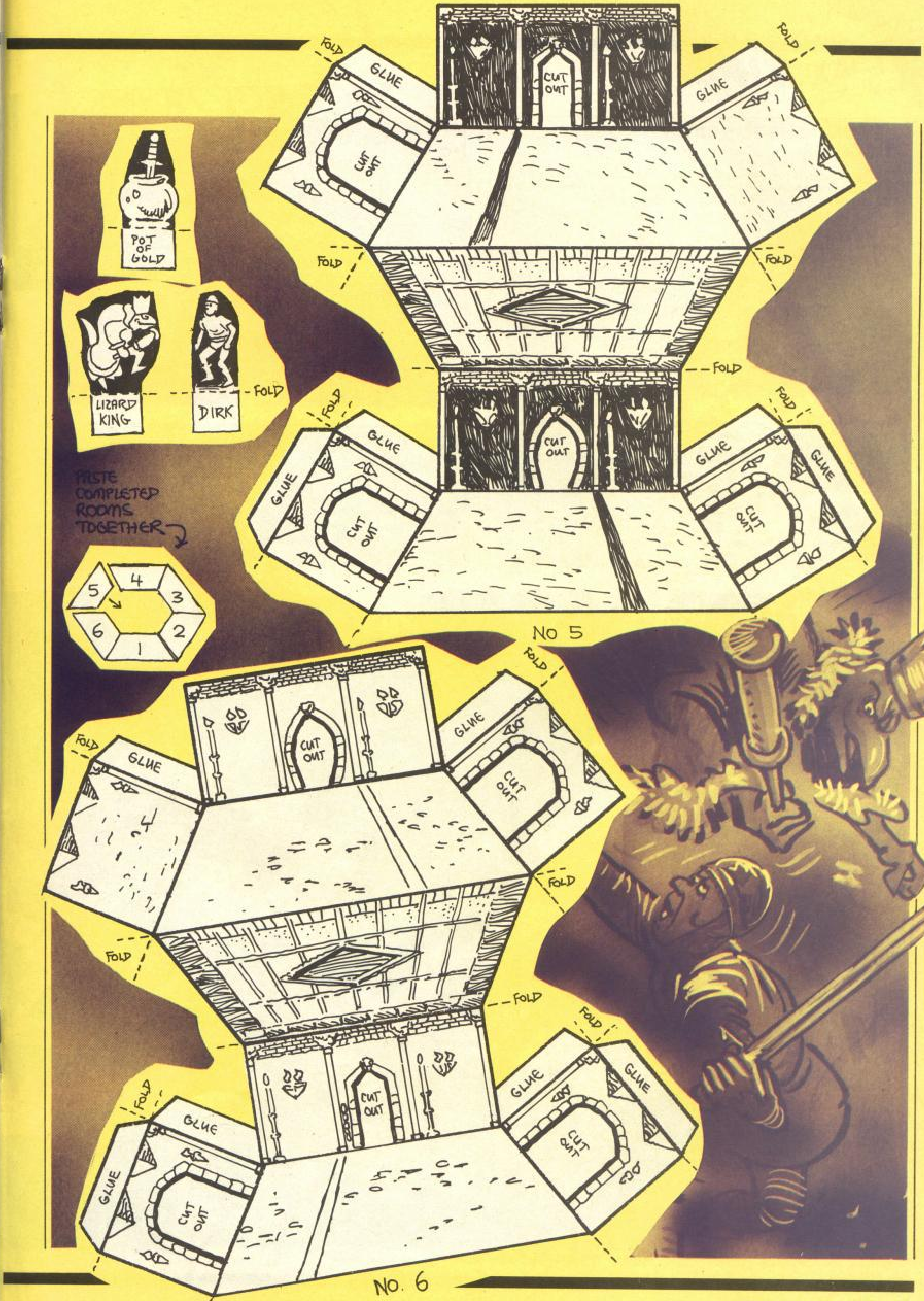
Load the program and when the loading screen appears, reset the computer and type . . .

```
POKE 49048,76:POKE
49049,226:POKE
49050,252:POKE
49215,112:POKE 49216,191:SYS
49152 (RETURN)
```

The rest of the game will now load. When the computer resets, type in . . .

```
POKE 26700,191:SYS 2076 (RETURN)
```

For unlimited Parkies (sounds like a disease!)


POT OF GOLD
LIZARD KING
DIRK
FOLD
PASTE COMPLETED ROOMS TOGETHER
1
2
3
4
5
6
GLUE
CUT OUT
No 5
No. 6

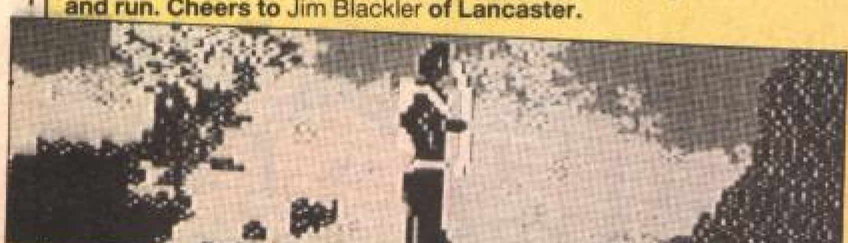
TIPS

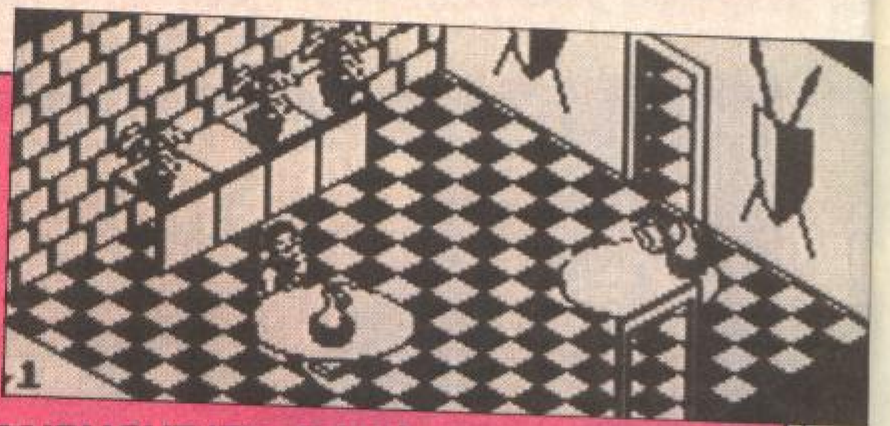
BEYOND THE FORBIDDEN FOREST (US Gold)

Losing half your arrows every time you die is a bit frustrating, so why not type in the following listing to stop just that . . . making sure that you've got a fully rewound tape in your datacorder.

```
BEYOND THE FORBIDDEN FOREST LISTING
10 FOR A=49152 TO 49178:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS 49152
20 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 160, 9, 185, 17,
192, 153, 119, 4
30 DATA 136, 208, 247, 96, 24, 20, 60, 188, 17, 20, 72,
52, 176
```

Now RUN the listing, press play on tape and the program will load and run. Cheers to Jim Blackler of Lancaster.





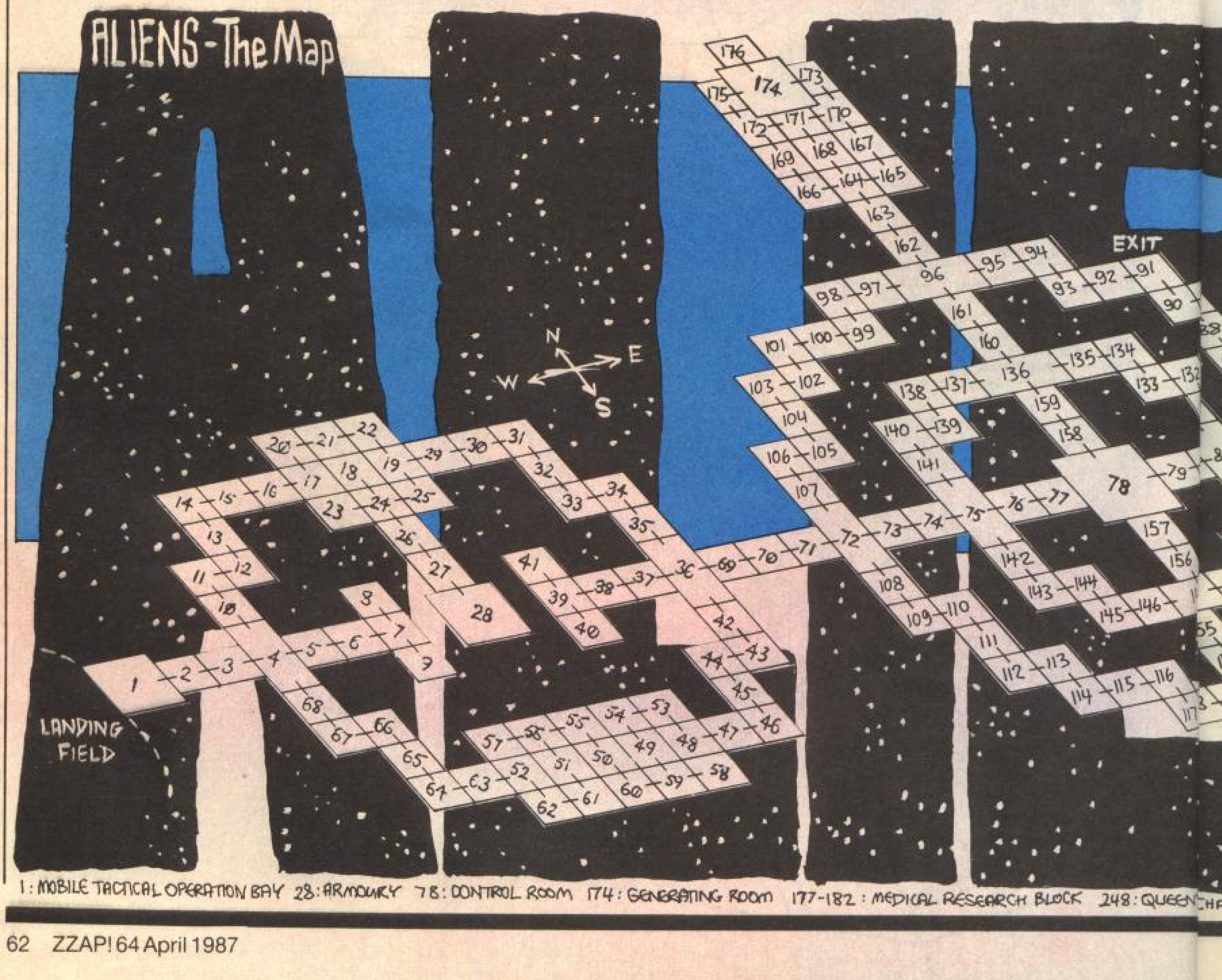
FAIRLIGHT (The Edge)

Not unlimited lives. Not even unlimited energy. It's a 'stop the screen blanking out when moving from location to location' POKE. Pretty pointless, but at least you can see how the computer draws up each screen. Just load up the program, reset the 64 and enter POKE 39419,173:SYS 20992 (RETURN). Thanks to Jim Blackler from Lancaster.

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD (Alpha Omega)

Does the promise of unlimited lives inspire you enough to dig this out of the discarded software heap? It does? Good! Load up the program, reset the 64 and enter POKE 18870,234:POKE 18871,234:SYS 9728 (RETURN) to restart the game with as many lives as there are stars in the Universe.

Thanks to Simon and Adrian Meads of the Donut Cracking Service.



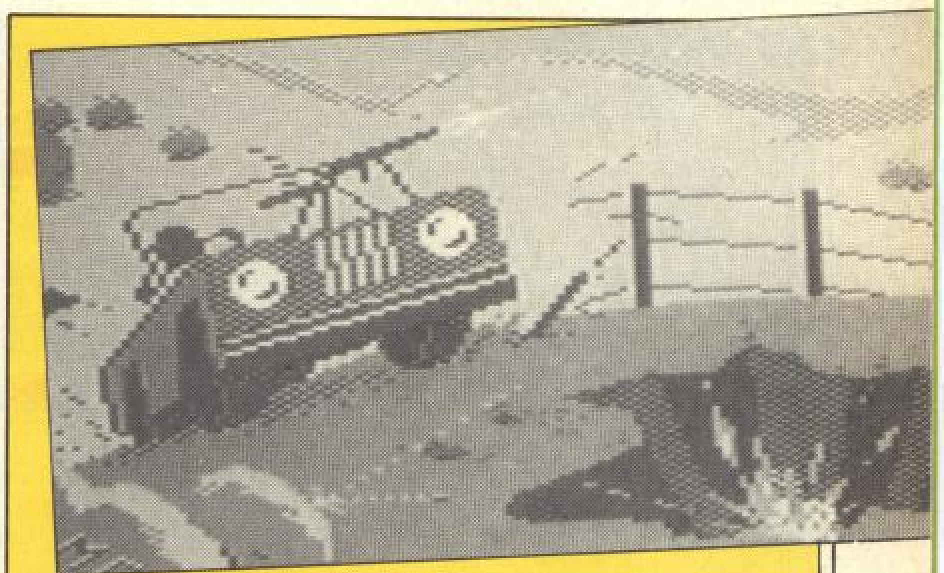
1: MOBILE TACTICAL OPERATION BAY 28: ARMOURY 78: CONTROL ROOM 174: GENERATING ROOM 177-182: MEDICAL RESEARCH BLOCK 248: QUEEN'S CHA

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE
(Software Projects)

This listing is a welcome relief! *Dragon's Lair II* **might be fun to play, but it's really difficult to progress to the later screens. If you're having similar problems, type the following** Tim and Ian Fraser **listing:**

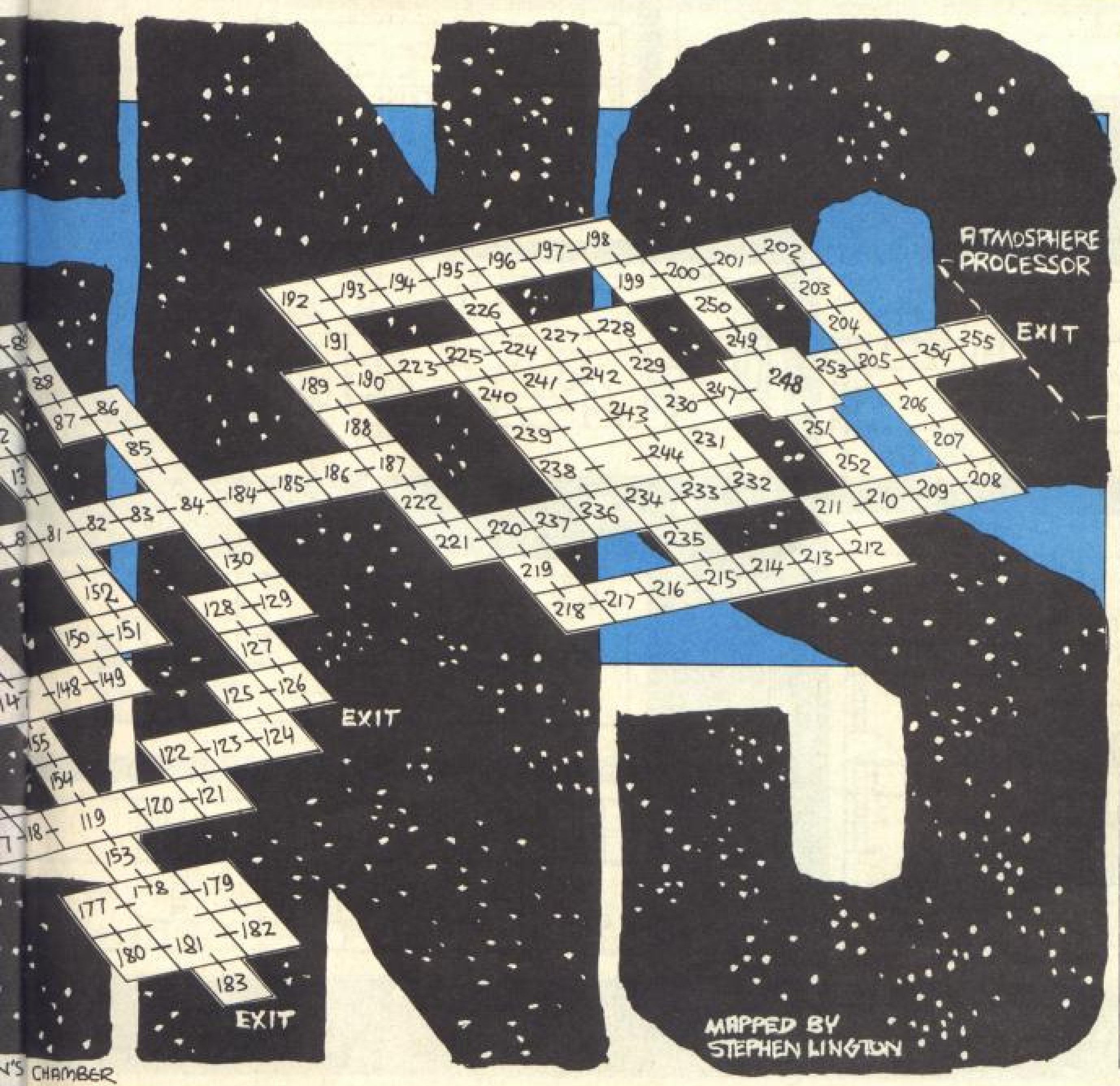
```
ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE LISTING
10 FOR I=49152 TO 49220:READ A:C=C+A:POKE
I,A:NEXT:IF C=7747 THEN PRINT "OK":END
20 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":END
30 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 96, 141, 45, 9
40 DATA 169, 1, 141, 215, 8, 162, 29, 189, 39, 192,
157, 96, 1, 202, 16, 247, 76, 32, 8, 120, 72
50 DATA 169, 76, 141, 241, 69, 169, 118, 141, 242, 69,
169, 1, 141, 243, 69, 104, 88, 76, 0, 68
60 DATA 169, 165, 141, 16, 16, 76, 0, 12
```

When you've finished, RUN **the listing and type** SYS 49152 (RETURN) **to load and run the program with unlimited lives.**



JEEP COMMAND
(Bug Byte)

The following POKE makes this tricky game a little easier, allowing your jeep to speed through obstacles and over holes – completely unharmed! The bombs can still kill you though . . . Anyway, load the program, reset the machine and type POKE 32627,241:SYS 16384 (RETURN). **Thanks, fan mail and cheques to** Simon **and Adrian Meads of the Donut Cracking Service.**



BACK TO REALITY
(Mastertronic)

A ghastly game! If you're unlucky enough to have bought it, never mind – console yourself with Jim Blackler**'s nifty POKEs. Load the program and press the Q key to reset the machine, allowing you to enter** POKE 20109,173:SYS 16384 (RETURN) **for unlimited lives.**

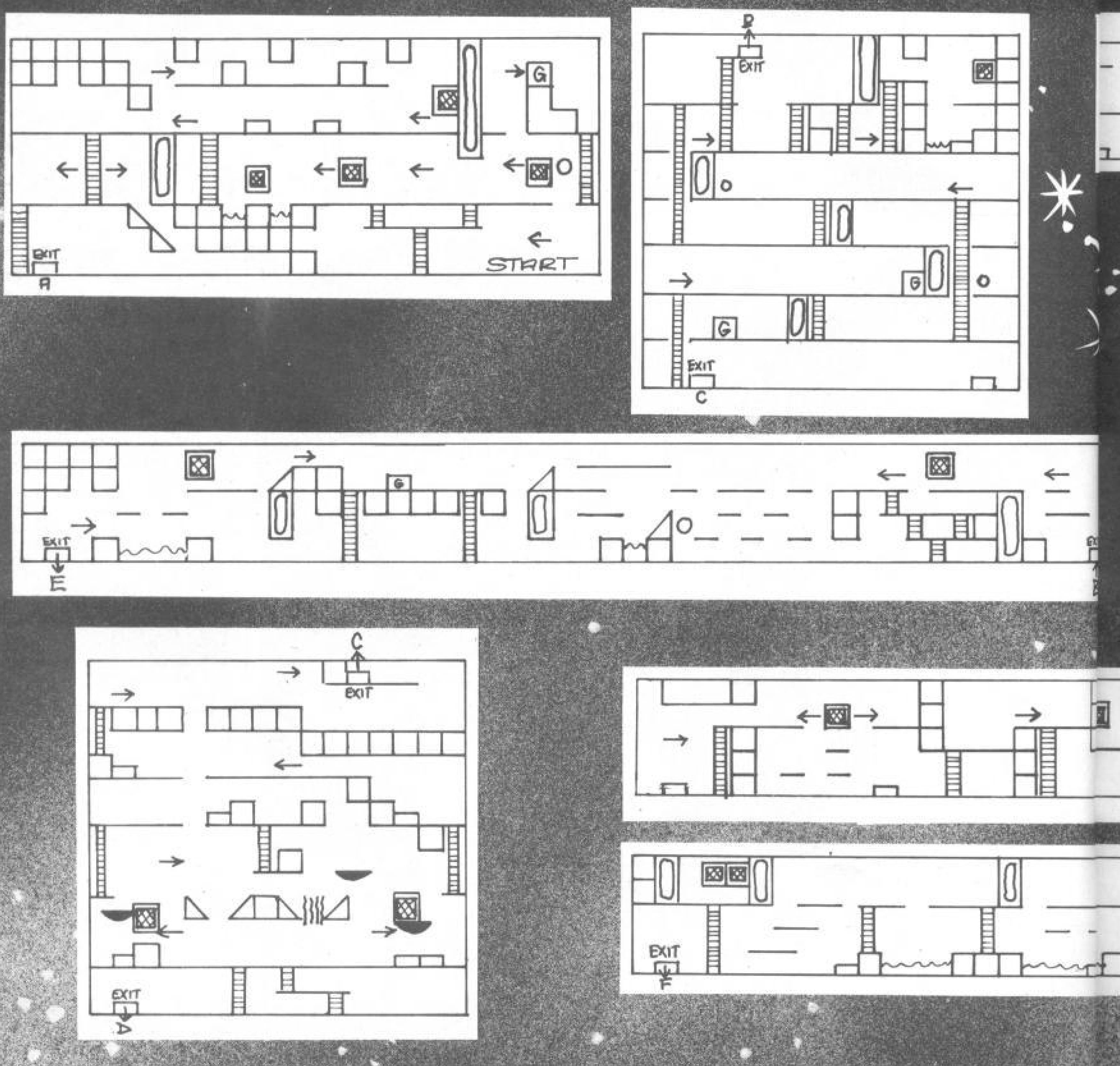
BLUE MAX
(US Gold)

Talk about crumbly – this one is out of the Ark! If you want to squeeze a few more hours playing time out of this 'classic', just exhume it from its box, plonk it gently into the C2N and type LOAD (RETURN). **When the** READY **prompt appears type** POKE 1011,248:POKE 1012,252:RUN (RETURN) **to load in the next bit. When** READY **appears, enter any of these . . .**

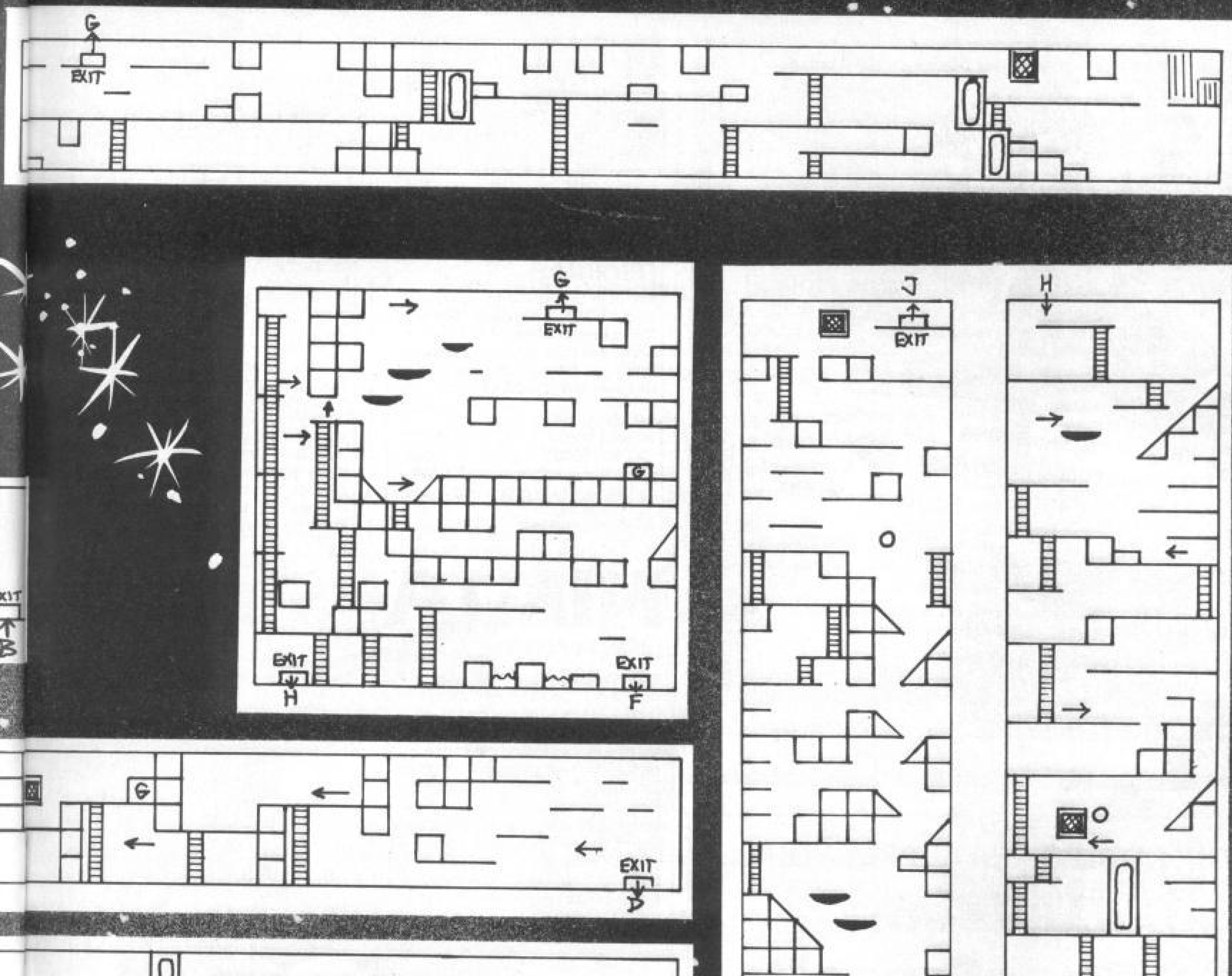
POKE 17925,173
Infinite fuel
POKE 25584,173
Infinite bombs
POKE 17438,0
To take no damage from flak

Then SYS 32768 **to restart the game with the selected choices. Oh, I nearly forgot –** Jim Blackler **of Lancaster supplied the above.**

FUTURE KN



IGHT THE MAP
PART ONE: THE SPACESHIP



MORE NEXT MONTH...

JUDGE DREDD (Melbourne House)

Jim Blackler of Lancaster is back again with more infinite things, this time for Melbourne House's latest and cruellest joke. Insert the cassette into the datacorder and type in . . .

```
JUDGE DREDD LISTING
10 FOR A=49152 TO 49163:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS49152
20 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 121, 141, 187,
5, 96
```

Type RUN and press play on tape to load the first part of the program. When the cursor appears type:

SYS 679:SYS 679:POKE 2565,96:SYS 2048 (RETURN)

To load the next section. When the cursor appears, enter . . .

POKE 45181,142
Infinite energy
POKE 39483,189
Infinite ammunition

And SYS 31264 **to start the game with your selected changes.**

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)

This game is extremely difficult, so these infinite lives POKEs are a welcome relief. First of all, put a rewound cassette into your C2N, then type in the following listing . . .

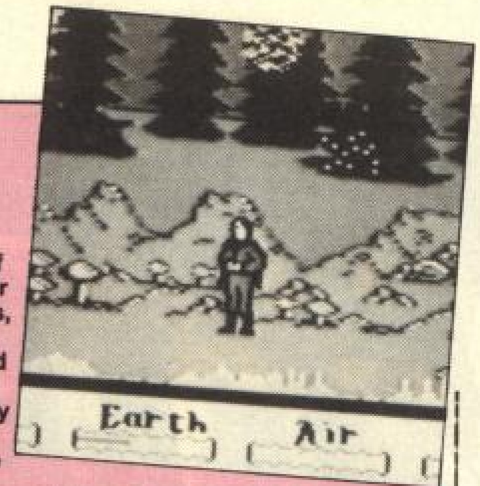
```
KNUCKLEBUSTERS LISTING
10 FOR A=49152 TO 49163:READ Z:POKE
A,Z:NEXT:SYS49152
20 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 121, 141, 187,
5, 96
```

Now RUN the listing and press play on tape to load the first part. When the READY prompt appears enter:

SYS 679:SYS 679:POKE 28605,173:RUN (RETURN)

To load the rest of the program with infinite lives. Cheers to Jim Blackler **of Lancaster.**

CHAMELEON (Electric Dreams)



In last month's review of this rather good program, we moaned a little about the lack of clear instructions. Programmer Martin Walker **of Sleaford, Lincs, agrees, "Electric Dreams misunderstood my instructions and they didn't print any of my supplied section on how to play the game! The story was only icing on the cake and let's face it – if you remove the cake, what's left would make you sick."**

Anyway, being of a kind disposition, he's sent us the missing instructions to help any players who have become stuck or are still confused.

RULES OF THE ELEMENTS

Fire destroys Water and turns Earth to Fire
Earth blocks Water
Air blows out Fire
Water destroys Fire and turns Air to Water

COMPLETING THE LEVELS

The four central boxes on the scroll are a combination lock. Red boxes are opened by passing power points, or at one of the four times of day. The hidden flux appears at the different sounding power point when all boxes are open. The ruling demons can be destroyed permanently after this is picked up. When all four demon gauges are empty, any power point transfers Chameleon to the next level. In Limbo, simply pass all four power points to get to the exit.

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)

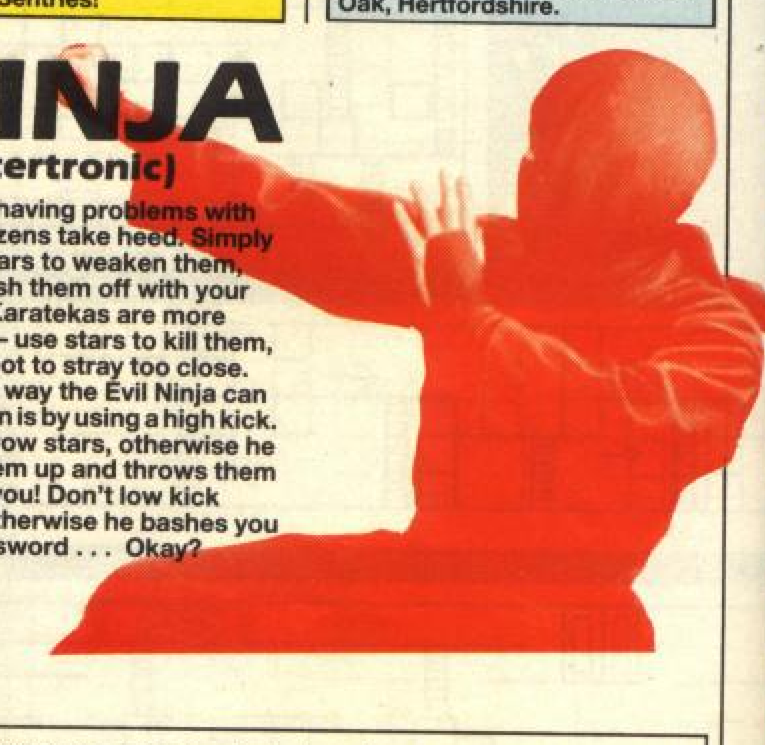
Think you're good at *The Sentinel*, **eh? Well, here are codes for three landscapes which certainly sort the men out from the boys . . . Anyone else found any devious landscapes?**

36 58999784
Rather tricky
232 66496003
Even programmer Geoff Crammond can't do this landscape!
1318 58896035
SEVEN Sentries!

TERRA COGNITA (Code Masters)

A handy tip for this . . . erm . . . well, this program. If you fly over the first extra life block, collect it and then fly into the time shift square behind it. You will be put back to the beginning – with the extra life! Keep repeating this until you have nine lives, then carry on playing in the normal way. If you really want you can keep on doing it and score zillions of points (yawn). Thanks to Stacey King **who lives in Goff's Oak, Hertfordshire.**

NINJA
(Mastertronic)



Anyone having problems with the denizens take heed. Simply throw stars to weaken them, then finish them off with your sword. Karatekas are more difficult – use stars to kill them, and try not to stray too close. The only way the Evil Ninja can be beaten is by using a high kick. Don't throw stars, otherwise he picks them up and throws them back at you! Don't low kick either, otherwise he bashes you with his sword . . . Okay?

And another one bites the dust. If you have anything in the way of solutions, tips, maps or POKEs, why not grab a bit of the limelight AND win yourself the thanks of thousands of Commodore owners, by sending them in to ZZAP! TIPS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. **All the best stuff gets printed, and anything exceptional could well earn its author a T-shirt and some free software. Don't just sit there – do it!**

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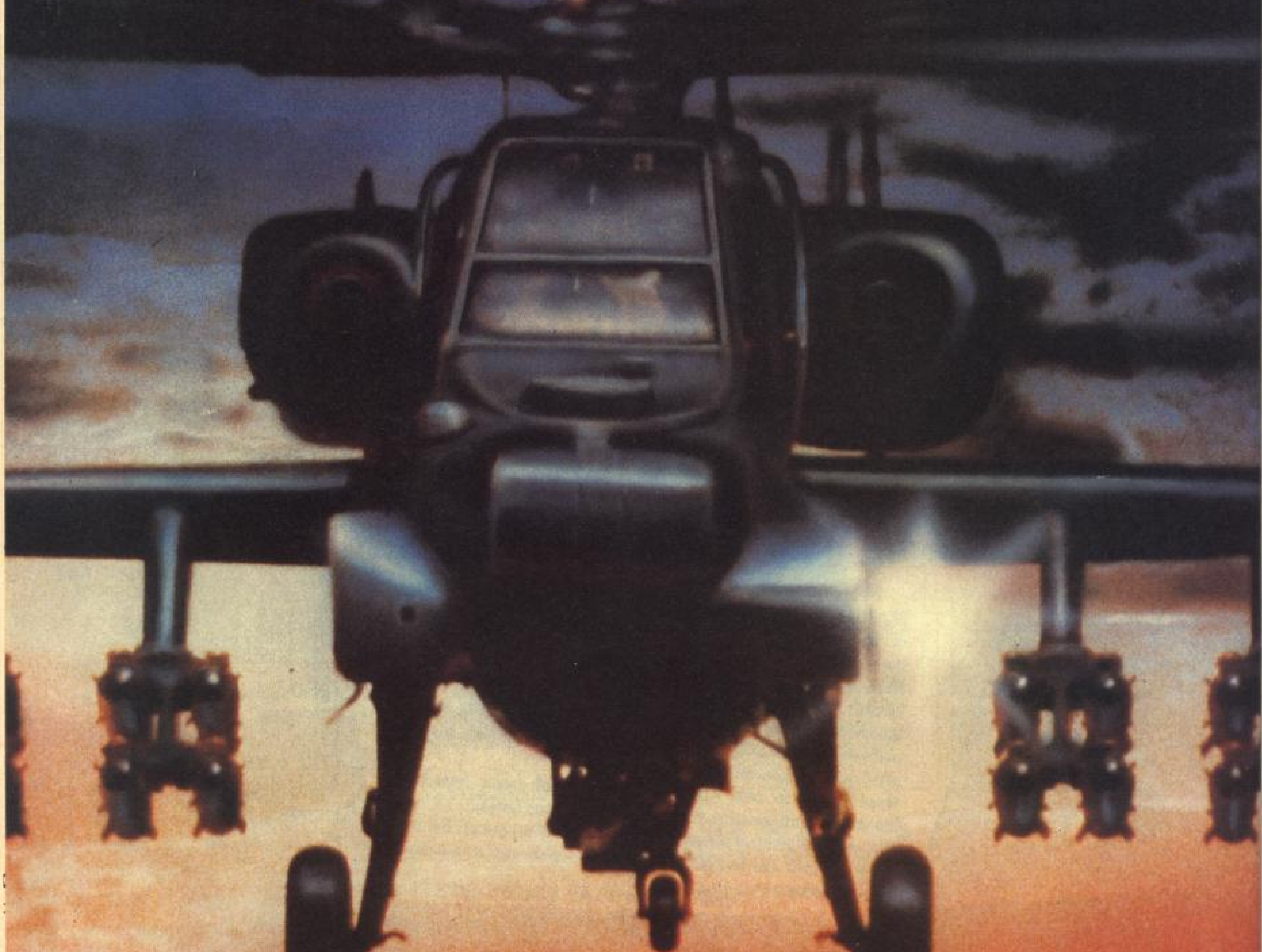
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A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.

ZZAP! adventure



All hail, fellow Wizards, Warlocks, and Witches! This month we take a further look at MUD, do battle with Masters of the Universe, **exercise a little** Imagination **for only £1.99, check out CRL's latest release,** Murder in Miami, **and indulge in other Wizardry from the Wand of You Know Who . . .**

Masters of the Universe

US Gold/Adventuresoft, £9.99 cassette

eeek! **Skeletor** (Trade Mark – Mattel Inc) is attacking **Eternia** and you, as **Adam** (Trade Mark – Mattel Inc) **Prince of all Eternia**, must become **He-Man** (Trade Mark – Mattel Inc) and defeat him in this great *Masters of the Universe* (Trade Mark – Mattel Inc) computer game!

Wow! Watch out for the **Røckbinders**, who – controlled by **Skeletor** – are guzzling their way through the granite to undermine our dear beloved **Eternia**! And watch out for **Orko** (Trade Mark – Filmation) . . . and **Evil-Lynn** (Trade Mark – Mattel Inc) . . .

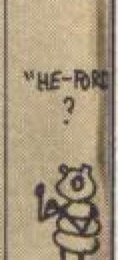
Well, that does it. The Wiz just can't bear it any longer. At the end of last year I said that I'd start to tell the honest truth about the way I felt about UK adventure software and when this game popped up on my screen something finally snapped.

It's appalling. It doesn't deserve to change hands for anything more than the price of a blank cassette. US Gold should be utterly ashamed to be offering software of this nature and should withdraw the product at once. And those are my more charitable feelings about the product . . .

However, there's no point in just being rude about the program. Let me now level with you and tell you in more reasoned tones why I feel this way. You, of course, may disagree, though somehow I doubt it.

First, let me make it absolutely clear that I hold no personal feelings of animosity against either Mike Woodroffe of Adventuresoft (the programmers) or US Gold themselves. On the contrary, Mike has hosted me at his offices in Birmingham and I was impressed by his dedication to adventuring in general – all of which I said in an article last year.







Mike makes no secret of his need to program mass selling games in order to pay the bills. He's perfectly entitled to approach the market in that fashion if he wants to. He obviously believes that the best way to get a big selling adventure onto the shelves is through licensing game themes from people like Mattel. OK so far . . . US Gold obviously agree with him, otherwise they wouldn't be distributing his product.

What isn't OK is the actual standard of the product itself. I feel pretty bad saying this because Adventuresoft are a good bunch, but really we've got to come clean here. This software is three years out of date. And to sell it in 1987 at this price is simply not on. And for me to say anything else in this column would be to do my readers a serious disservice.

Firstly, the design. The graphics are OK – some of them are even very attractive. But the text locations are brief and uninspired and the puzzles are frankly dull. Some of them are even bugged – I spent literally dozens of moves being 'dragged back towards the water' by a tentacle from the moat without ever actually getting to the water. And during the process I was able to swim happily to and fro across the moat!

Finally, after reverting to my boring Adam identity (instead of He-Man), I was told that 'the tentacles drag you into the water'. At last – I thought – I've reached the water! But no – the next line informed me that, once again, 'the tentacle drags you back towards the water'. Ah well . . . For once I was grateful when I died and had to start again.

And the whole structure is so limited. Examining most things results in the message 'You see nothing special'. Most locations offer nothing apart from their brief description – no objects to look at (unless they're required by the plot). You go into the Inn and try to buy a drink, but 'He-Man wouldn't waste time on such things' says the program. Well He-Man might not, but most adventurers would.

The parser is relatively efficient – it offers BOM (ie: OOPS, or Back One Move) as well as RAM save and restore. You can also DROP and GET ALL. But it doesn't tell you which word it doesn't understand and happily responds to inputs such as 'EAT KING RADNOR' with the response 'THAT WON'T HELP YOU AT THE MOMENT AND THERE IS NO GUARANTEE IT EVER WILL.'

It says the same thing if you enter 'QWERTY QWERTY' or any other rubbish.

What about interactive characters? What about vivid location descriptions? What about a bit of SCOPE – for wandering around and checking out pointless objects for the sheer fun of it; for discovering different ways of achieving one's ends, instead of simply cracking an invarying sequence of puzzles?

I don't know anything about the actual *Masters of the Universe* subculture, but I suppose someone had to spend quite a lot of money to buy the computer game rights. Perhaps they thought that by buying those rights they were in effect buying a big sale for the game. Perhaps even a position in the charts. Hasn't it occurred to the Powers That Be that there are other ways of getting people to buy your games – like programming them well, for starters.

Wouldn't it be nice for once if someone spent their money on buying up licence rights and then actually went ahead and developed a game that was – for example – up to *Pawn* standards!

Or is it that once the rights have been bought there isn't any money left over for the program itself. If that's the case then how about a little originality – at least you don't have to pay for ideas that you come up with yourself.

Or don't we have any?

As for US Gold – I can give them one idea for free. If they keep coming up with stuff like this, then pretty soon no-one's going to touch their product with a bargepole. No matter how much money they spend on licenses.

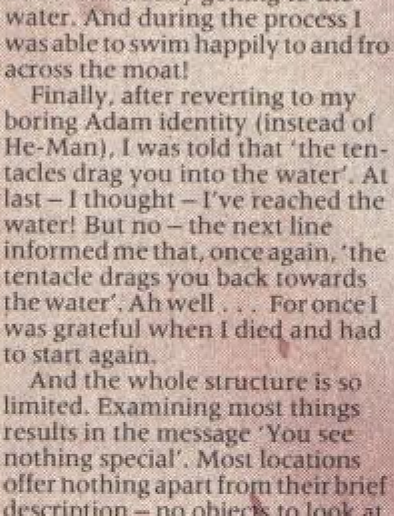
Come on Adventuresoft – you've got the talents if you want to use them – have a bit more confidence in your own ideas, stop wasting money on licenses, spend it on game development, and start winning customers instead of trying to buy them.

Finally – I suppose it's just possible that I've got it all wrong, and this game is really what everybody out there is waiting for. If this is the case, write and tell me, and I'll give up adventuring right now and retire to Disneyland (Trade Mark – Walt Disney).

Atmosphere	**45%**
Interaction	**45%**
Lasting Interest	**35%**
Value For Money	**30%**
Overall	**35%**

Imagination

Firebird, £1.99 cassette

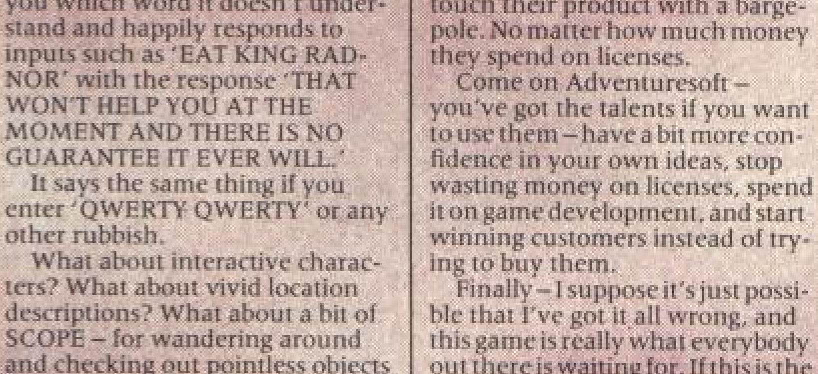


Well, this is certainly the month for original games. Here one Mr Torrence – programmer of *SubSunk*, one of the Wiz's budget favourites – indulges in a bit of light-hearted ribaldry, poking fun at other computer games – including some well-known adventures.

The aim of this GACced game, I think (I can hardly believe the inlay, but this is what it says), is to find out how many stars there are in the universe. When you load up, you find in the first location a computer, a monitor, and a floppy disk. Inserting the disk boots the system into life and if you examine the screen you find – hey presto! – a menu of game options.

If I tell you that the games on offer are:

2002 – A Very Odd Day in Space
Panic Miner
The Lords of Half Past Nine
Raid over Margate



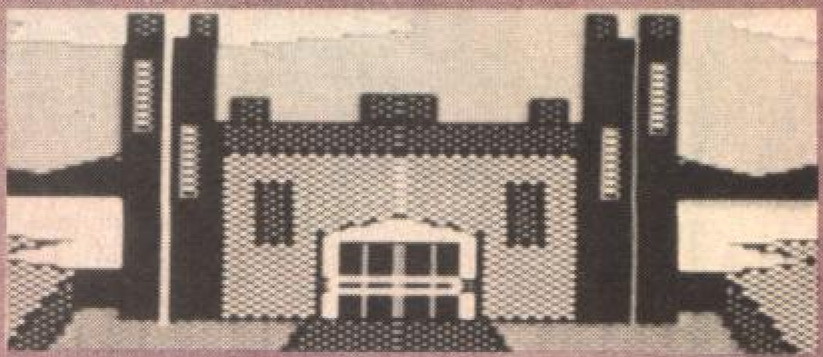
. . . then you may get some idea as to what's going on! You must enter each game in turn by selecting it from the menu, and then either dodge killer sprites (in 'Panic Miner', of course), or else giggle at the rather unkind take-offs of the famous Level 9 graphics in 'The Lords of Half Past Nine'. The trouble is, they really do look EXACTLY like Level 9 graphics!

Each game has something very different to offer, and the puzzles are really quite tricky, involving much entering and quitting of games as you rush hither and thither collecting various items to overcome the obstacles that pre-

sent themselves in each scenario.

I enjoyed this game, especially as I had the secure feeling that it would only have cost me £1.99, but I did think that there was perhaps a little TOO much variety in it. Sometimes I think games suffer if they try to include too much material at the expense of some form of unity – but this is very much a personal view and others may feel exactly the opposite. After all, there is something rather satisfying about solving one puzzle with an object brought in from another game, even if you do have to do a lot of scurrying to-ing and fro-ing. Anyway, at this price you can't lose!

Atmosphere	60%
Interaction	65%
Lasting Interest	62%
Value For Money	88%
Overall	**76%**



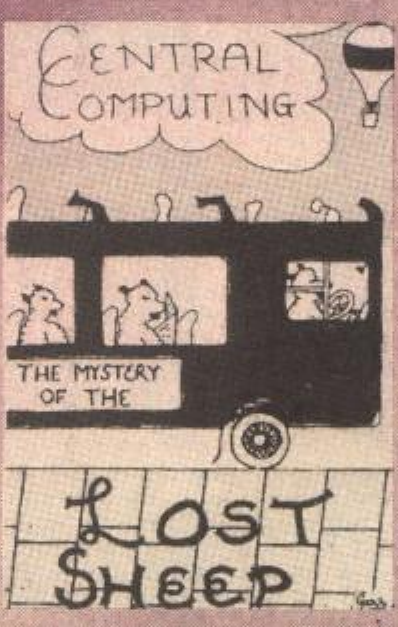
The Mystery of the Lost Sheep

Central Computing

Well, this is rather original. I must say. As a farmer you have lost your sheep, and as an adventurer you must cope with a number of rather unusual puzzles in an attempt to find them.

You don't get much help from the inlay, which really doesn't tell you a lot more than the paragraph above, but throughout the game there are helpful HINTS for the asking. I found myself asking for them quite a bit to start with, when I found myself in a field full of 'prombles'.

A 'promble' is a creature a bit like a sheep with a 'weird tail', and try as I could I simply couldn't make any progress – I attacked the prombles, I waved at the prombles, I talked to the prombles, I did just about everything to the b****y prombles. Nothing doing. Finally, I ate one and was rewarded with a couple of bones. These I stuck together to make a spade, and my travels begun.



This game is text-only and presents itself as being a little old fashioned, but there are a number of nice touches and it's certainly very original in tone. At the top of a mountain, 'You are surrounded by a Bad Attitude' – I'll say you are. And elsewhere you may even glimpse 'Holiness Itself'.

Central Computing can be reached at **61 Beech Road, Gillway, Tamworth, Staffs B79 8QQ** – but they didn't tell me how much the game was. One of the reviews quoted on the inlay refers to a price of four pounds. If this is the case I'd suggest that it's marginally overpriced, but still worth checking out if you're fed up with dragons and other more traditional fare.

Atmosphere	62%
Interaction	55%
Lasting Interest	58%
Value For Money	60%
Overall	**60%**

Murder off Miami

CRL, £7.95 cassette

I was rather rude recently about *Dracula* from CRL, so it was a nice surprise to find this game so enjoyable.

Based, so it claims, on a book by Dennis Wheatley, the game revolves around the death of Mr Blane on a boat called the Golden Gull. Mr Blane is a big man in the world of soap (the stuff you wash with, not the stuff you watch on telly) and so is his co-sailor. Could be they had a bit of a lather . . . or was ol' Blane washed overboard?

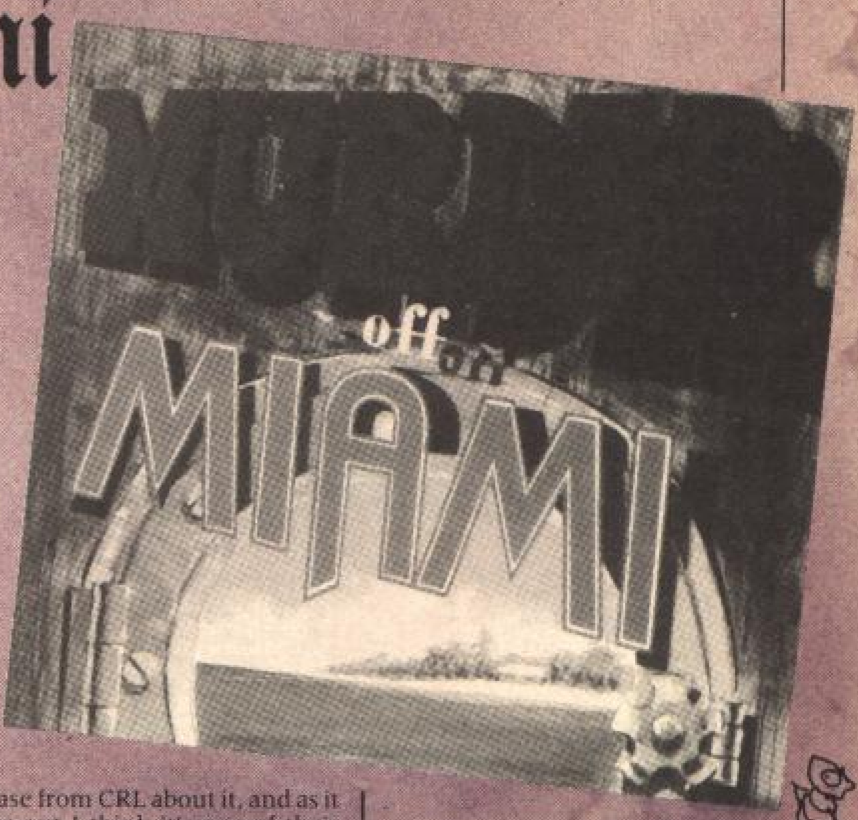
Up to you, Detective Kettering, to find out the truth. Programmed by Fergus McNeill of Delta 4 fame and Jason Somerville, this game has the familiar familiar Delta 4 hallmarks of (1) three parts (2) TALK TO feature (3) sense of humour and (4) attention to detail.

The last two features are best illustrated by a little sequence you might encounter at the beginning of the game. Sitting at your desk, you receive a memo from your boss telling you about Blane's death. You can, in the meantime, examine the ash tray and see an 'unfiltered Camel', which you can quietly enjoy for a minute or two. If however you spend too much time browsing around your office, in marches the boss who fires you for not leaping to your feet and rushing off to solve the crime as soon as you received the memo.

And if Adventuresoft are still wondering what I meant about 'scope' in a game – the above is the perfect example.

I found *Dracula* to be slightly dull in that it frequently nursemaided the player along predetermined plot lines. *Miami* does the same from time to time but it's far less obtrusive and there's always lots to do. Once you reach the Golden Gull you'll find plenty of guests to interrogate and a mine of clues and information that you must piece together to find out the truth. And although many characters will reply to your questions with the non-committal 'Ask me tomorrow' their presence adds much interest to the game.

This game was a pleasant surprise – I hadn't even had a press release from CRL about it, and as it turns out I think it's one of their better games. As a Quillustrated program it also has some really quite attractive pictures as well and just goes to show (as Fergus McNeill has shown several times already) how much good you can do with that worthy utility.



Atmosphere	80%
Interaction	75%
Lasting Interest	82%
Value For Money	75%
Overall	**81%**





How to get MUGged! A Wizard tells all . . .

Last month we gave you a brief overview of the various on-line games currently to be enjoyed by modem owners. Now we get down to the nitty-gritty, with a detailed dip into the MUDdy waters of Britain's most popular Multi User Game . . .

MUD started off in 1979, brainchild of one Roy Trubshaw at Edinburgh University and written in BCPL (one of the forerunners of the modern C language). It was later further developed by Richard Bartle on an Apricot using a language called MUDDLe (for Multi User Dungeon Development Language) – Mr Bartle's private development tool derived, I believe, from PROLOG. Currently the main framework of the program is written in PASCAL, and occupies approximately 4 megabytes of code (including all the data).

The program first took off on a DEC10 computer at Essex University and this version – known as MUD1 – can be still be played on that machine when computing time is available (usually late at night). Alternatively you can try it out on Compunet. You could also get it up and running in your living room – DEC10's are no longer manufactured, but you used to be able to get one for about half-a-million quid and they should just fit into most suburban living rooms.

Alternatively, you could log onto someone else's using your 300/300, 1200/75, or 1200/1200 modem. And with the same equipment you can log onto MUD2 – the latest version of the game and the one being offered by British Telecom. It's this version that we'll be looking at for the next couple of months, seeing what it offers and how it works out on the value for money stakes.

MUD2 differs from MUD1 in that it runs on a VAX computer and is somewhat larger in size, having been more recently updated. As I write, it is being increased in size from 700 to around 1000 locations, with approximately 150 objects to play around with and 80 'mobiles' (computer controlled characters) to dodge and dally with.

There are roughly a thousand currently registered players with another hundred or so joining each month. BT's MUD system has facilites to cope with quite a few callers – there are about 20 incoming lines as well as 64 PSS inputs, but as a general rule the average number of players tends to be around eight at a time. Because the game can only run when the VAX isn't being used by sweaty businessmen during office hours, MUDders can only log on between the hours of 6.00pm and 8.00am weekdays and at weekends. At peak periods expect there to be as many as twelve to fifteen other users logged into the game.

The print-outs in this month's column should give you some idea of what it's like to play MUD, together with the commands and background to the game. Every printout you see was obtained during a real MUD session, but don't take my experiences as anything special – get on-line and try it for yourself.

In particular, when I played people seemed to be remarkably friendly – but that doesn't mean that you won't meet some nasty types. In fact some people deliberately create both 'good' and 'bad' personae to play with as the mood takes them. Hmmmm . . . Reckon Freud would have been interested in this!

THE AIM OF THE GAME . . .

Typing INFO during the game will get you the following message, which tells it all . . .

The object in MUD is to become witch or wizard. You'll see plenty of them about on the way to your objective to witness the immense power they command, and the consequent rewards of obtaining them yourself. The way is long and hard, however, and only the most determined and resourceful are likely to succeed. The route to such lofty heights is by obtaining points. Many of the objects in the game are treasures, and have a value (use the VALUE command to find out what a particular item is worth).

To score the points, the objects must be dropped in the swamp, which is easy to find even if you don't know where it is, because SWAMP is a command which moves you towards it. Once you have swamped a treasure, its points are transferred to you, and you can seek out more loot! The number of treasures you can swamp at once is only limited by the amount you can carry! The most valuable objects in the game are players. The more points you score, the higher your level becomes, and the more points you are worth if killed in a fight. Of course, the better able are you to win any combat in which you are involved. The way is still open for the resourceful novice to catch you unawares and rise several levels by bringing about your demise, so all high-level personas must be constantly on their guard, excepting wiz's, of course, who are mortal-proof!

The higher your level, the better your chance at being able to use magic. To become a magic-user, you must touch the touchstone and survive. The more points you have, the higher your chance of survival, but then it's hard to get to such a level without having magic to help! The choice is yours, but touch the touchstone you must if you are ever to gain ultimate power!

MUD LOG-ON SESSION . . .

Here's a sample print-out from a recent logging-on. This is what you'll actually see coming up on your VDU if you dial into MUD . . .

1) OK boys and girls – you're there. This is what you see when you've entered the game. Type GUEST and PROSPECT for Account ID and Password if you're just having a trial run. Otherwise enter the number and password supplied with your MUD Starter Pack. Always change your password if you're logging on for the first time – just for safety's sake.

2) Next follows a brief summary of relevant news about the current status of the game . . .

3) And now the command menu. The Post Office enables players to leave mail for each other. The Town Crier doles out news. You can check previous notices by pressing 5, or examine your account (to see how many credits you've got left) by hitting 6. If you've got an 80 column screen you may wish to hit 8. And entering 2 gets you into the game . . .

4) The Wiz is using a new account, so there are no previous personae available. Had I played before on this account I would be able to pick up where I left off with one of my previously created characters . . .

5) As it is, I'll make for the big time – MAMMOTH!

6) 10% of MUD players are women. But there are a lot of female characters in the game. Hmmmm . . . Someone, somewhere, isn't happy with the way God made them! I think I'll stay male . . .

7) The first location. In fact the Tea Room isn't really part of the game itself – it's more of a 'terminus' from where you can enter the Land. Sometimes it's nice just to sit here and watch people arriving – if your phone bill can stand it!

8) Ah well . . . Guess I've got to start paying some time.

9) The WHO command tells me who's playing at the moment. Of course it doesn't tell me where they are – finding them is another matter altogether. Of course I may not WANT to find them!

10) Notice how my command SIP TEA is broken up by an incoming message from the program. It's still processed in the normal way, and there are ways of stopping this sort of interruption if you want to. Partaker, by the way, is calling out in the hope that someone will give him a 'glow' by magic (ie: a source of light).

11) I bravely move NORTH (N), having sipped my tea. No tea, no exit from the tea room. And having done that . . .

12) I'm in the LAND! Dumped at by the program into a random location, so that each time you play you kick off somewhere different . . .

13) And Tally Ho! Biggles! Seems like there's a damsel in distress out there! Shall I sally forth and rescue her, only to find that she's a male player in disguise! Eeeek! I somehow don't think it'll be long before I start screaming for HELP too!

MUD LOG-ON DETAILS

Requirements: 1200/1200, 300/300, or 1200/75 modem plus COMMS software plus MUD Starter Pack (see below).

Log-on number: 01 998 8899 (1200/75)
01 997 9433 (300/300)

Play times: 6.00pm to 8.00am weekdays all weekends.

To order starter pack and game credits, phone 01 608 1173

FREE TRIAL LOG-ON PROCEDURE

Dial the relevant number for your modem and enter 'MUD', password 'GUEST', and ID 'PROSPECT'. You then get about ten minutes playing free, with limited commands, before the computer cuts you off. If you do play as a guest, behave yourself – Wizards can check on who you are and make trouble for you later if you don't behave well.

```
1 OK. Terminal is RTA11:
  MUD session started 22-FEB-1987 20:30:23.49
  Interpreter created 3-FEB-1987 08:19:42.96
  Database created 15-FEB-1987 12:31:16.62
  Type QUIT to abort login.
  Account ID: (enter your ID number here)
  Password: (enter your password)
  OK

  **** WELCOME TO THE  WORLD OF MUD ****

  DATELINE: Thursday, 19 February 1987

  The MUDline number (voice) is 01-608
  1173 if you want to order a MUD starter
  pack or credits.  Credits can also be
  bought directly from FORUM with a
  credit card.

2 A new database should appear tomorrow
  or over the weekend.  There's new
  treasure and mobiles, and as usual a
  stack of things you'll have to find for
  yourselves. Key changes are as follows:

  * The vicious currents north of the
  galleon change with each reset. Before
  negotiating a passage to the island,
  best consult the chart.

  * The banshee's scream does half the
  damage it does in this database, nor
  does it attack low-level personas.

  * It's possible to flee from the dragon
  and survive, though expensive.

  * X is short for EXITS.

  *See Option 7 for a description of a
  'demonstrator'

  Have fun....

  Thank you.
  **** MUSE LTD ****
3 Menu options:
  0 - Exit and logout.
  1 - Redisplay the menu.
  2 - Enter the Land.
  3 - Post Office/Saloon Bar.
  4 - O Yez! O Yez! O Yez! (Town crier.)
  5 - Previous notices.
  6 - Examine your account.
  7 - Special notice.
  8 - Specify terminal type.
  99- Change accounts.
  To order credits, Use option 3 and
  once there, change booths to the
  Village Shop with a /B command.
  Which option do you require (1 for list)? 2
  Front End V2.40
  Last logged in on 0/0/0 at 00:00:00.
  Current credit balance is 50.0. Last
  reset was on 22/2/87 at 20:29:49.
  Current charge rate is 5.00
  credits/hour. Personae available are
4 ***None***
  -+ Please change your password. Type
  /P at the "*" prompt. +-
5 By what name shall I call you? mammoth
  Creating new persona. What sex do you
6 wish to be? male
7 Elizabethan tearoom.
  This cosy, Tudor period room is where
  all MUD adventures start. Its exposed
  oak beams and soft, velvet-covered
  furniture provide it with the ideal
  atmosphere in which to relax before
  venturing out into that strange,
  timeless realm. A sense of decency and
  decorum prevails, and a feeling of
  kinship with those who, like you, seek
  their destiny in The Land. When you
  are suitably composed, you may enter
  that domain by stepping through an
  opening to the north; however, you are
  welcome to stay here for as long as
  you like, sipping tea and watching the
  world go by.
  *
8 -+ Charging has just started for this
  account. +-

9 *who
  Scrappy the protector
  Nemesis the necromancer
  Snurt the hero
  Wintermute the sorcerer
  Tailor the superheroine
  Aurora
  Vishnu the witch
  Partaker
  Mammoth
  *
  Still in the Elizabethen tearoom, eh?
10 Try sipping some tea, it might help
  you go places...
  *sip t
  A male voice in the distance shouts
  "glow for partaker please ?..".
  *ss
  You watch the world go by.
  (Persona saved on 1).

  *n
11 As you step through the opening, you
  become swathed in a fine, gossamer
  mist. The Elizabethan tearoom fades
  hazily away, and vague, new shapes
  begin to form around you. Their
  outlines become more defined, their
  colours grow stronger, and the mist
  thins out into pale wisps, which
  gradually disperse away to nothingness...
  *
12 Beaten track near cliff.
  You are at the end of a rough track.
  There is a dangerous cliff to the west
  marked "Lovers' leap".

  *
13 A female voice in the distance shouts "HELP!"
  *
```

```
1 Rapids.
  You are on the bank of some dangerous
  rapids. Beyond them to the east the
  river goes underground; to the west it
  continues out of sight, and you can
  hear a thundering as of falling water
  from that direction. To the south can
  be seen (and smelled!) a fuming swamp,
  and southeast is a small pond.
  Aurora the yeowoman is here.
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch is here.
  Simon the arch-wizard is here.
  Tailor the superheroine is here
  carrying the axe, the key8, the
  wafer6, the wafer5, the brand5 and the
  dagger.

2 Tailor the superheroine says "Feeling
  peckish, Mammoth?".
  *"what have you got?"
  Lying temptingly before you is an
  appetising piece of succulent
  ambrosia.
  *
3 Aurora the yeowoman has just arrived.
  *"my god! are you from a cordon bleu school?"
  *
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch says "take
  it Mammoth".
  *
4 Tailor the superheroine says "Only a
  few *EXTRA* thin wafers (hint hint Simon)".
  *
  Filofax has just arrived.
  *
  Tailor the superheroine says "Oops,
  help is needed with dwarves.. see you later".
  *
  Tailor the superheroine has just left.
  *
5 Vishnu the voluptuous witch says "bye".
  *"bye"
  *
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch giggles.
  *
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch says "eat
  the kipper - its nice!".
  *invent
  Don't be stupid, it takes years to
  invent anything REALLY useful!
  *inventory
  You are carrying the following:
          the fur, the pin, the kipper
  and the top.
  *eat kipper
  Gobble gobble munch munch chew chew
  GULP! That was tasty!(Persona saved on
  34).
  *
  Aurora the yeowoman says "Have you
  spun the top?".
6 *"no - but i
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch says "See?".
  *'ll try now"
7 Simon the arch-wizard tells you "Type
  QUIT !!!"
  *
  *
  Vishnu the voluptuous witch laughs.
  *quit
  Cheerio!
8 You are no longer following Simon the arch-wizard.
  You scored 34 points this game.

9 MUD          logged out at 22-FEB-1987 21:04:32.07
  %REM-S-END, control returned to node _VAX3::
```

MUD MOBILES!

A 'mobile' in MUD-speak is a computer controlled entity. There are over 80 of them in the game and although they're a fairly recent invention they are rapidly gaining significance. Richard Bartle's training in AI is prompting him to spend more time developing this side of the game and to programming 'intelligent' mobiles that will really give the human players a run for their money.

In fact, mobiles already have a certain degree of intelligence. They assess your fighting prowess when they approach you and, if they think they've got a good chance, they'll attack you. If not, they'll flee. For this reason, if you're attacked by a mobile the chances are that you've had it! Cowardice and a swift pair of feet may well be your only way out.

Different mobiles have different characteristics. The Parrot, for example, will pick up snippets of conversation and repeat them elsewhere. Some clever adventurers have already clued up on this one, so beware if the Parrot suddenly says 'Give us a password then'!

The Magpie lives up to its name by stealing items from players and dumping them in the swamp, whereas the Dragon zooms around performing pseudo-Wizardly functions, such as resurrecting 'dead' mobiles (who go to Heaven) and retrieving items from the swamp.

Beware – mobiles may not be all that they seem! Wizards have the power to use them as 'puppets', so if that mobile starts to get just a teensy-weensy bit too clever, think twice before insulting it!

MUD COMMANDS . . .

The following commands are accepted by MUD2 . . .

COMMAND	EXAMPLE
GO <direction>	SE (moves you South East)
DRop <object>	DR ALL (drops everything)
FOLLOW <creature>	FOLLOW NANCE (you go where Nance goes)
Get <object>	G ALL (picks up everything)
GIve <object><creature>	GI STRING TO ALF (gives the string to Alf)
HIT	HIT TOM (hurts Tom, but doesn't start a fight)
Inventory	I (says what you're carrying)
Inventory <player>	I WIBBLIA (says what Wibblia is carrying)
Kill <creature> <object>	K JOHANN (starts a fight with Johann)
LEVELS	LEVELS (says what the player levels are)
Look	L (describes your room)
Look <container>	L BOX (describes box as if you were inside)
Look <creature>	L MOUSE (describes mouse as if it carried you)
Look <room>	L ETEARM (describes Elizabethan tea room)
<creature><string>	JAKK 'HI THERE' (message sent to Jakk)
PUT <object> <container>	PUT STRAW IN BOX (inserts the straw in the box)
REMove <object> <container>	REM MOUSE FROM BOX (gets mouse from the box)
SCore	SC (gives a run-down on your persona)
SHout <string>	SH 'HELP!' (message sent to all, anonymously)
STeal <object> <player>	ST ALL FROM JAN (steals all Jan's possessions)
string>	'YOU OWE ME ONE' (message sent to all in room)
USE <object>	USE AXE (uses the axe in current fights)
WHO	WHO (names all current players)

With a little help from my friends . . .

Here's a sample bit of interaction from the game. Tailor the Superheroine is obviously a decent sort of chap . . . or chappess. You can't be sure, of course . . .

1) Hmmm . . . Quite a little party of us here. Simon the Arch-Wizard is keeping an eye on me.
2) I'm starving! It's 9.00pm in the Real World and I'm enjoying myself so much I've forgotten about supper!
3) Comments in quotes can be heard by everyone in the room.
4) Hmmm . . . I think there may be something about this food I don't know about!
5) I tried to type INVENT for INVENTORY, but at least MUD has a sense of humour.
6) Another split input.
7) Simon seems to be trying to tell me something!
8) 34 points!! And all I did was stand there and get given things. God bless these generous MUDders!
9) Back to the real world. In fact, when you actually play, you go through the command menu before reaching this stage, so you can leave messages, inspect your account etc, before logging off.

Next month – more MUGging, more Tips, more everything . . .

We've been a bit pushed for space in this month's issue, but the Wiz felt that the space devoted to MUD was well worth while for the many readers who don't have modems but might like to know what on-line games can offer.

Next month we'll continue with a look at Shades and some of the other topics we haven't had time to cover, such as independent MUGs, a brief chat with Pete Austin on the subject of the long-awaited but sadly postponed Level 9 MUG, and of course your letters, tips, and news.

Don't forget that the Wiz can be contacted c/o Zzap!64, or by modem on BT Gold 83:JNL251.

Clever Contacts

Every so often in an adventurer's life comes a moment of everlasting glory. Whether it's because you've just been carried shoulder-high through Middle Earth, emerged unscathed from the Underground Empire, or completed your 1000th game, there's only one true means of celebrating your success – become one of the Legendary Clever Contacts.

Write to the Wiz with the names of the games you've solved and your full contact details. You can include a phone number if you wish, but remember that you may receive many calls – so check first with other members of your household.

If you're getting in touch with one of the Clever Contacts, make sure that you enclose an SAE or – if you're phoning – keep the contact to a reasonable hour. These heroes and heroines are doing a good job – don't abuse them, and they'll reward you with much useful advice.

Pirate Adventure, Circus, Zzzz, Terrormolinos, Subsunk, The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Quest of Merravid, The Hobbit
Danny Dinneen, 12 Bishopscourt Way, Wilton, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Worm in Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snowqueen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B90 2HU

Ultima IV, Zork II, Suspended, Pirate Adventure, Voodoo Castle, Critical Mass, Wizard and the Princess, Mission Asteroid, Mummy's Curse, Mission Impossible, Robin of Sherwood, Masquerade
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8EB

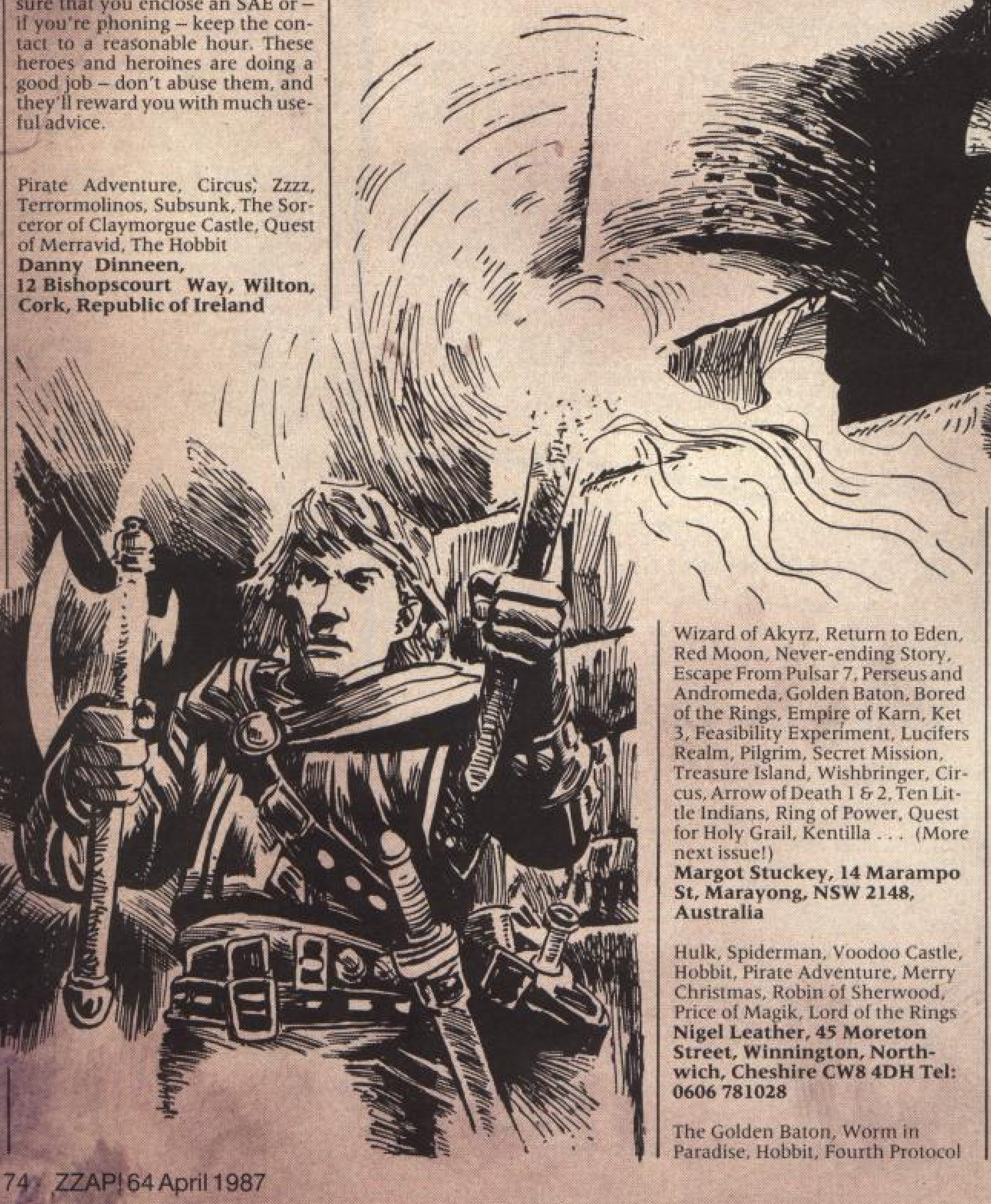
Hampstead, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Fantastic Four, Lord of the Rings, Terrormolinos, Castle of Terror, Mordens Quest, Zzzzz . . . , Heroes of Karn, Twin Kingdom Valley
David Sutherland, 54 Wendover Road, Eltham, London SE9 6PB or 01 319 3395 after 6pm

Zork I, II, III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, Sub-Sunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, (Pt 3 only)
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN





Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla . . . (More next issue!)
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol, Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand, Tel: 867074

Leather Goddesses, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Wishbringer, HitchHikers, Seastalker, Questprobe III, Hulk, Spiderman, Exodus Ultima III, Ultima IV, Return to Eden, Worm in Paradise, Red Moon, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Heroes of Karn, Perseus and Andromeda, Nine Princes in Amber, Gremlins
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: (0227) 274846

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula
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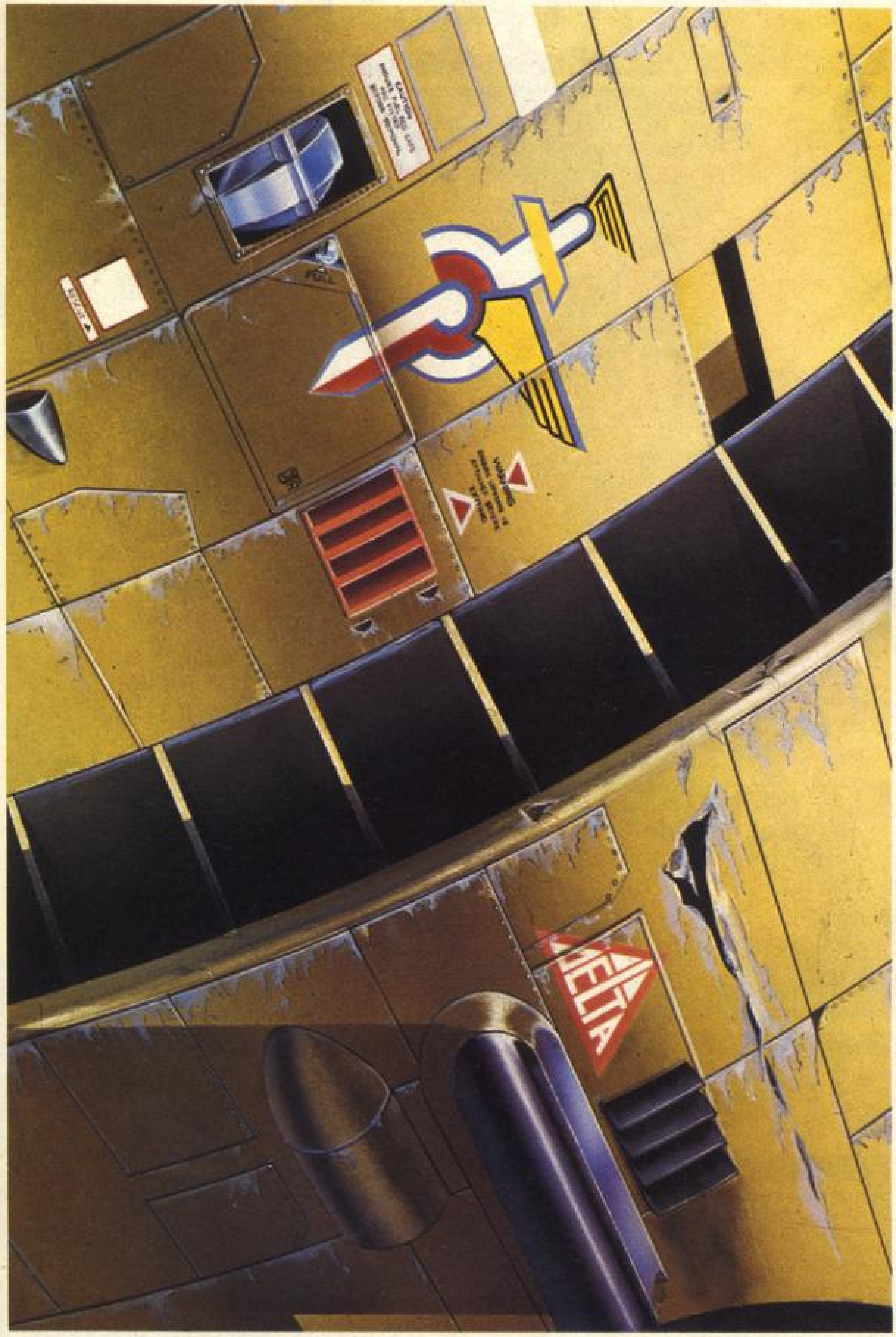
Life's a trial for your humble Comps Minion. It's a continuous chore of making tea and coffee for the Spiky-Haired Ones, running errands, or wading through a mountain of mail, sorting out entries for the ever-so-popular ZZAP! competitions. There must be more excitement somewhere . . .

I've always fancied trying out my skills on one of those huge bulldozers. I'd enjoy demolishing a derelict building or doing a spot of trailblazing, perhaps clearing the path for a new motorway alongside ZZAP! Towers. That would be a lot of fun, especially if the Spiky-Haired Ones got in the way. Just thinking about it cheers my day no end.

Talking of bulldozers, those clever people at **CRL** have produced a new game which revolves around the adventure of a Spacedozer driver. Apparently in the not too distant future, space is going to become as littered as Earth and there'll be plenty of work for Spacedozer drivers. Scuttling hither and thither through the Milky Way they'll be responsible for clearing pathways through untidy asteroids and general space debris.

The game sets you at the controls of one of these Spacedozers and one day you are hard at work clearing another path through space when suddenly an invading fleet of spaceships appears, hell-bent on a total takeover of Mother Earth. There's no time to go for help; instead you have got to face up to their deadly weaponry, armed only with a massive Spacedozer, quick reactions and your wits.

Being the kind people they are, **CRL** have decided to give away some neat prizes in this Spot The Difference competition: a huge model of a spaceship will go to one lucky ZZAP! reader and a couple of smaller models are available for two runners up. In addition, a further 50 entrants will win a copy of **CRL**'s latest game based on the adventures of a Spacedozer driver, entitled *Death or Glory*. All you have to do is study the two pictures of a Spacedozer at work and circle the differences on picture B. Fill in the form, and send your entry to **ZZAP! DEATH OR GLORY, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. Make sure it arrives before the 9th of April, 'cos that's when I'll be riffling through your entries.



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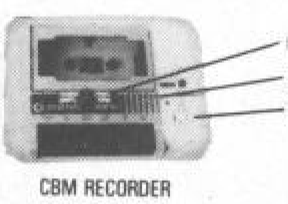
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TAMARA KNIGHT has arrived on the planet Astar, in order to wish her miniature neutron bomb adviser into a perfect lover. The trouble with wishing-planets is that they take everything so literally. I know, I am a bomb, and I have just struck us dumb, as well as causing Tamara to give birth to a pair of goats, I'll never say 'You're Kidding' again.

Why is it that whenever I find myself in dire straits, the only successful communication that I can achieve is with you, the reader of a prehistoric, non-electronic publication called ZZIT! or CRABS or some other such nonsense? I mean, what have you ever done for me? Yes – you! Can you transform me into a human being? Of course you can't! Can you endow me with a small moustache and some leisurewear? Not a chance! Can you conjure up our former travelling companions, Jimi Hendrix and Pinnochio? Not on your . . . just a moment . . . the door of the Macdonalds teleporter is swinging open, and out steps a long-nosed wooden puppet and a half-Cherokee former-guitarist from the Ike and Tina Turner Band. We are saved! And if it is anything to do with you, my splendid reader, I thank you from the bottom of my power-cell. Yes you.

Now I am not a vindictive bomb, for a bomb that is . . .

Our two travelling companions seem to find Tamara's sorry state highly amusing. Indeed, they are rolling about the surface of this planet, giggling and failing to control their mirth. This cannot be right! Aren't they supposed to be saving us? Now I am not a vindictive bomb, for a bomb that is, but I admit to you, gentle reader from my distant past, that I am a wee bit disappointed by their attitude. They might come to a sticky end for mocking my poor, mouthless, virgin-even-though-she's-delivered-a-brace-of-goats Tamara. Not to mention the birth mark on the back of her neck, which is my current disguise and location. I can't even turn myself into something more practical, because us Macdonalds neutron bombs are symbiotic, and if we can't communicate with our poor human hosts, we ain't worth spit.

They are trying to regain their composure, sucking down the last of their childish guffaws, sniffing back their snotty sniggers, Jimi wiping tear-crinkled eyes and Pinnochio wiping the sap from his knot-holes. I doubt if Pinnochio has got the sense to say the right thing and get us out of this mess, he's only got a wooden head, but at least Jimi Hendrix has a modicum of intelligence. After all, he was once a neutron bomb advisory unit like me, when he was disguised as Jimminy Cricket. Jimi wipes his eyes, and pulls himself upright, slapping Pinnochio on the back between bouts of laughter. He recovers himself enough to say, Son of a bitch . . . this is sick! and promptly turns into a wiry brown puppy, with shaggy hair and a Fender Stratocaster round its neck, curiously sniffing at a large hillock of vomit.

You know, I sincerely regret wishing him a sticky end, this planet seems able to misread my thoughts as well as literalise my words, and Jimi has turned his attention to Pinnochio's leg. I think he wants to make friends with it. Well I never! says the incredibly stupid puppet, and vanishes from the plot forever. The puppy wanders off wagging its curly little tail, towards a playful group of sodden cats and dogs, presumably conjured up by an idle comment about the weather.

That leaves Tamara and my silent self quite alone again, with nothing to do but relay our predicament to you. I mean, just how can we wish ourselves eternally happy, after I have rendered her speechless with a rather hasty You don't say , and then hushed my own mouth? Maybe we can communicate our wishes in letters of fire on tablets of stone, or plant them out in corn-seed and wait for Spring, or etch them in icy Morse-code on the arctic seas. On the other hand – is there a biro lying around somewhere?

All we have to do is to make a properly constructed wish on this planet, and all our dreams will come true. Is that too much to ask? Everything? Of course, I can't advise Tamara of any of this, deprived of my telepathic powers. I can't even tell her that I am programmed to explode by the end of the next page, if she does not fulfil todays's quota of Macdonalds Teleporter Booth sales. She is just sitting here, on this kettle of fish which appears to be some sort of fine, staring at the twin baby goats, who demand milk. I wish they would stop it, because every time they bleat what sounds like Baah! , a piece of soap, snatch of music or interior of a public house materialises.

Something catches her eye, over there behind that thrashing pile of suffering catfish. There, in the far distance, we can just make out the figure of some sort of mono-pedal humanoid, hopping awkwardly towards huge mounds of amputated feet. In the circumstances, I am not in the slightest bit surprised. Tamara 'shoos' the kids away, and wades through fish whose mouths are filled with unmelted butter. She waves her perfect hands, and snorting through her perfect nostrils, heads towards the receding back of the humanoid, but it does not see her. So off we go, heading for the foothills, carefully avoiding that disgusting horde of mickles doing something quite unforgiveable to a muckle.

Perhaps the one-legged pogo-humanoid can open his mouth without putting his foot in it.

Far be it from a cynic like myself to hint at optimism, but perhaps the one-legged pogo-humanoid can open his mouth without putting his foot in it. Perhaps he can bite his tongue, mince his words, help us. Perhaps not. The sun nudges the horizon, throwing long shadows across this insane landscape. A rat scampers by, demanding to be smelled. Some little cotton socks chase after it, demanding to be blessed. I begin to feel really sorry for your graphics artist as our pathway explodes, due to some wickedly mined Ps and Q. Towards the horizon, waves of Russian religious paintings wash the shore, as far as the icon sea. Wolves arrive at doors. Rainclouds change into teapots, never raining but pouring. The half-light of dusk obscures the hopping humanoid, but Tamara struggles on. She really is wonderful, up to her thighs in stinking wriggly toes, and she will not give up, the indelible in pursuit of the implausible.

I am glad to report that she avoids the man with the twelve inch pianist, and several other antique but cheap jokes. I know it's Episode Five already, but I'm wondering if it was such a good idea to exist in the present-continuous. I mean on the plus side it gives the impression of immediacy to, say, a reader of 20th Century Earth-type 'Zzits' or 'Crabs', but on the negative side of narrative prose, I haven't got time to think about the future before it's past. Bombs need sleep too. Bombs spend most of their life asleep. I once went to school with a nice little bomb called Alma Geddon, who slept underground for forty years without doing a stroke of work, and it wasn't the end of the world. Until she woke up, that is. It's hard to be a bomb sometimes. Tamara trips over the humanoid.

It writhes among the severed feet, trying to remove a fork from its vulgar trousers, and vowing never to use that particular Anglo-Saxon expletive again. I am dismayed to see that it is obviously male, and not only sports a small moustache but also writhes in leisurewear. He catches sight of Tamara, who is leaping up and down, pointing to the area of smooth skin where her mouth used to be. Hi there! says the humanoid, and immediately apologises as we shoot up into the air. Whoops, look, hang about . . . er, I mean, please can you help me? Tamara takes the noose from her neck, and chafes me severely in the process, then grabs hold of the thrusting fork, which instantly ceases motion. Oh thank you, thank you, young lady, I can't tell you how much I . . . No! cancel that one . . . an omnibus vanishes just before it reaches your stop somewhere in the galaxy, as usual. I'll be darned if I . . . Tamara grabs him by his single leg, and hauls him out of the path of a giant sewing machine which charges towards the horizon stitching everything in its monstrous path. The humanoid begins to cry. Tamara feels like crying too, but it's not the same without a mouth to pucker, so she cradles his head on her lap, as he sobs and moans, and sucks his thumb. Now he sucks her thumb. I must admit, between you and me and the other thousands of readers of the best-selling computer publication on your poxy planet, I feel somewhat jealous. I long for the time when I too can sob and moan and have my head cradled in her lap, but I am still a super-intelligent bomb disguised as a blemish on the back of the neck of the only perfect entity in the galaxy. Tamara bends to hear what this weedy uniped is mumbling, her long mane brushing his miserable face, and I catch some rambling story about him being a journalist working for the Dali Express, arrived on Astar in a Macdonalds Teleporter Booth. Unfortunately his first words on arrival were to do with his leg being pulled. Swearing did not help. He raises his head, extends a shaking hand towards Tamara's lovely gobless face, and says, This is all some horrible mistake. I'm just a newspaper man . . .

I am watching the look of blank amazement on his face, as the headline 'Gotcha!' is printed across his lifeless brow. The sheets of cheap newsprint flutter from her lap as my hostess leaps up, startled by the humanoid's transformation into crumpled origami, the thoughtless paper head remaining in her hand, its wordless paper mouth still encircling her thumb. Her eyes widen, her hands tremble, she touches me here



Part Five

By Mel Croucher

at the nape of her neck with her free hand, but I am helpless. I cannot advise her. I am not even sure that dreams should come true. Perhaps they are better left as dreams. In total frustration, Tamara Knight rips up the sheets of newsprint, a howl of despair muffled somewhere inside of her perfect throat. And then she pauses, an idea forming in her perfectly confused head.



The Whole of Page Three of the Dali Express consists of a snapshot of the planet Titsenbum.

The whole of Page Three of the Dali Express consists of a snapshot of the planet Titsenbum, with the headline 'Saucy Starbirds Say Castrate Rapists Now', but what's this on Page Four? There is a small item concerning the ancient religious martyr Saint Samantha. It seems that her bra-less blouse has appeared in a shimmering vision to some simple peasants in a grotto, and preached to them in fluent Iranian. The headline runs 'BLOUSE PREACHES SHI'ITE.'

Tamara totters to the safety of a haystack, carefully removes a needle, hardly disturbing the camel passing through its eye and sits herself down where the yellow stalks make interesting patterns on her skin. She appears to be tearing up the headline very carefully, and laying out the individual letters in a line. I am waiting with growing excitement. I think that she has the basis for a really great board-game here, wherein players could take turns to make intersecting words using little squares with letters printed on them. It could be called 'Monopoly'. But all that is for the future, when I become a man, and live happily ever after with Tamara Knight.

She stares at the letters for a few minutes, as the sun sets, and tries to remember her spelling lessons from when she was pre-programmed inside her test tube. Slowly, meticulously, she spells out the phrase 'LOUSE HAS SPEECH'. The remaining letters blow away on the wind, causing a very confused rastafarian whippet breeder named I'I BERT to materialise far far away. Tamara my love! I communicate with joy, How absolutely brilliant!

And true to my words, the foothills turn into diamonds, huge gold-framed mirrors appear in serried ranks, spotlights punch the sky, celebration fireworks explode in joyous patterns, laser beams flicker and dance, a thousand volcanoes erupt and the sun goes nova . . . oh dear. I really must get this bit right or we will be incinerated before we can share our first kiss. I gather my thoughts, sift them through my sentence parsers, and slowly annunciate, Tamara, please do not interfere with what I am about to say, ahem . . . (for the first time in three episodes, Tamara is clad accidentally, and in only a strip of lace around her fetlocks, but even a hem is a start) . . . I wish that the sun which has just gone nova and is frying the landscape reverts to its former stability and that the recently erupted volcanoes become gentle tufty hillocks again.

We're allowed as much gratuitous violence as we want, but smut is out.

The sun obediently beams, gently. So far so good. The volcanoes implode and become gargantuan pubic mounds. Ah well, you can't win them all, and surrealist readers will find some satisfaction hereabout. I wish that Tamara's perfect mouth is returned to its former perfect place, and that her honour and virginity is not affected by her giving birth to a couple of goats. Tamara whoops Yipee! with delight, and every living thing on the planet urinates simultaneously. Careful baby, long ago on planet Earth an editor sits poised, blue pencil in hand, reminding us that this is a wholesome publication. We're allowed as much gratuitous violence as we want, but smut is out.

So this is it! At last! Tamara, you must now wish me into a perfect human male companion for yourself, maybe with a little moustache and some leisurewear thrown in, so we can live happy ever after, without the risk of me going critical and detonating every few hours. Tamara is taking a deep breath, which is one of the most beautiful sights in the universe, she is clearing her mind of all spurious thoughts (which doesn't take long), she is patting my tiny roundness affectionately, and now she speaks slowly and clearly. Dear Planet Astar . . . (Several million parking meters, and an army of Vulcan Added Taxmen appear) No, no, forget that . . . (The word 'that' disappears from the memories of all sentient beings in this sector of the galaxy) This is Tamara Knight speaking , and I would like you to grant me a wish so that the little bomb on the back of my neck and I can live happy ever after. OK? Alright . . . (Every signpost turns due East. Ten batallions of the Red Army march into sight singing the Horst Wessel song. Bottles cf brown table sauce cover the landscape with pungent goo.) Oh Louse! It's hopeless. I wish none of this had ever happened and we could start all over again . . . oops!

. . . I'll leave you now, dear reader of earthly computer magazines called ZZIT and CRABS. Maybe we are en route to a place of specks of dust, slimeballs, swirling gases and a universe about to be born, where we'll have to wait a little less than 69 billion years for you to exist again. Maybe we'll arrive on the planet Astar, and I'll say something like You're Kidding , and we will exist in the same time loop for ever. Maybe I'll detonate before the end of this paragraph because Tamara has fallen down on the job, and I am so designed to punish her. Maybe everything will work out just . . . OH NO! We can't possibly be here! I don't believe it . . . !

To Be Continued . . .

WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS •

SHOOT A SPIKY ONE

Two winners from the **Piranha**-sponsored competition will be entering the Combat Zone arena before too terribly long – **Brian Neilson** of Petersburn and **G Jackson** of Dinas, Powys will have the chance to shoot pink paint at the people who make my life a misery. Shoot to hit, boys – shoot to hit! No less than 30 runners up are due to receive a copy of *Rogue Trooper* just as soon as the Commodore version is complete. They are . . .

Neil Telford, High Harrington, Cumbria, CA14 4LW; Luke Horton, Hayes, UB4 8BH; Robert Karn, Clapton, London E5 0EB; ZZAP! Reader, Malvern, Worcs, WR14 2ML; Jonathon Eggleton, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6PP; M J Barron, Northants, NN6 0NQ; Vicki Blundell, Middlesex, EN1 3RA; Jamie Hickman, Cumbria, CA17 4LZ; Scott Wilkinson, Nottingham, NG17 7EL; Gregg Bottril, Loughborough, LE12 6NU; David Hickson, Durham, DH1 4NL; Graham Gale, North Baddesley, Southampton SO52 9NE; Simon Whitehead, Crawley, RH10 6TH; Jake Barayeu, London N16 6NJ; Carl Evans, South Wimbledon, SW19 2TG; Simon Worsfield, Basildon, SS15 5XG; M Gattie, Knutsford, WA16 8QH; G Kangis, Woking, Surrey GU22 7HN; Ron Wright, Derby DE7 1TG; Russel Wing, Hinton, TA17 8TB; Stuart Simon, South Shields, NE34 0SQ; David Sands, Dunmurry, Northern Ireland BT17 0QZ; Derek Henbridge, Glasgow, G66 4DG; Darran Pocock, Barking, Essex IG11 8LH; David Ovington, Worcester WR2 5PB; Louise Helen Wright, Walsall, WS7 8JT; Christopher Hudson, Liverpool, L23 0SG; Martin Roach, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6HY; Steven Barnes, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE30 3DS; Terry James, Stratford, E15 4HW.

FEUD

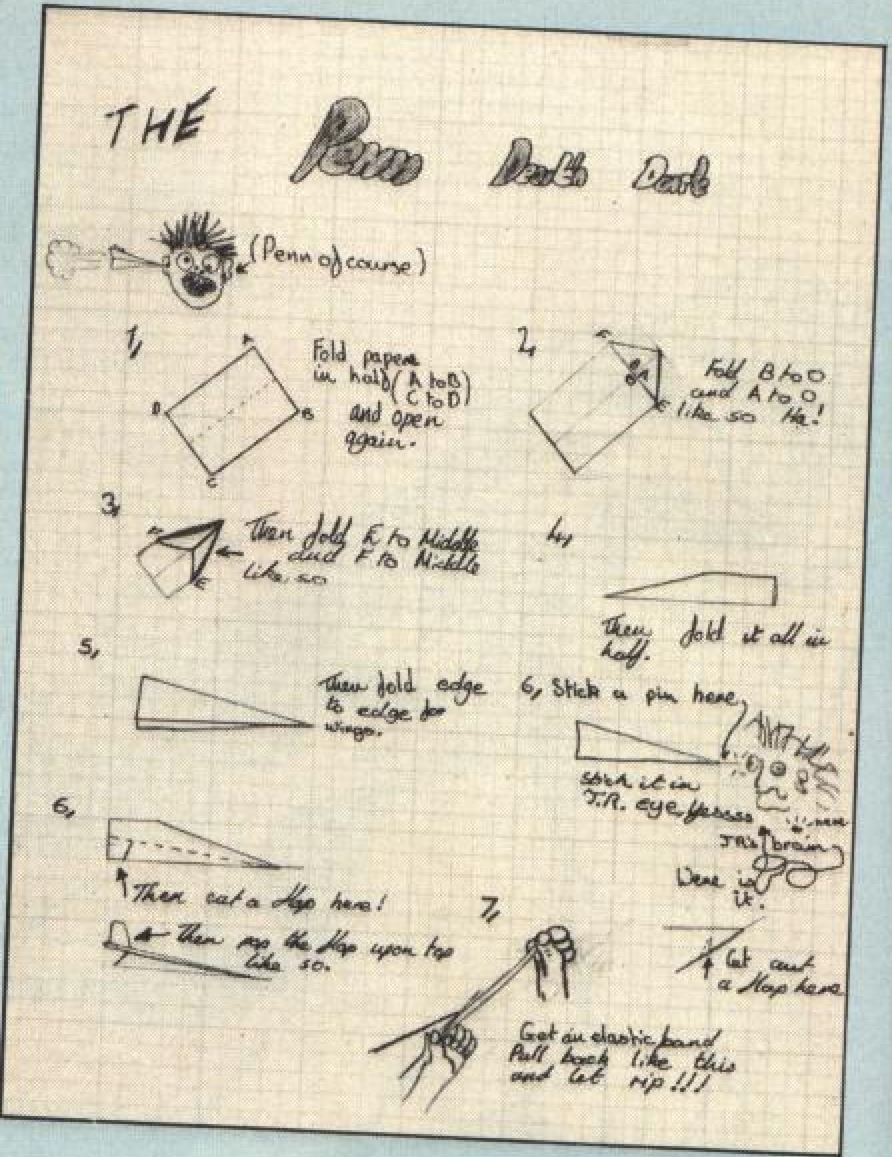
A tricky competition this one – and one which put you in a predicament that I'm all to familiar with as the Spiky Ones argue between themselves, making my life a misery in the process. Entrants had to come up with a way of stopping two rampant wizards from fighting and destroying the environment. **Martin McKinney** of Bournemouth came up with the best idea and wins a day out to the London Dungeon in the loving care of **Mastertronic**. Five second prizes of a *Magnum* joystick and a copy of *Feud* go to . . .

Tim Welton, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX6 3SE; Neil Overy, Arundel, BN18 9AJ; Mark Ratcliff, Nr Canterbury, Kent CT4 5DH; Andrew Russell, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 7JX; Mark Watkins, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 9BB

25 runners-up each receive a copy of the game and will have to settle the Feud on-screen. They are . . .

Robert Keating, Liverpool 19, L19 3PS; Paul Brassington, North Wingfield, Derbyshire, S42 5HY; Lloyd Thompson, Dearham, Cumbria; Stuart Combellack, Nr Swindon, SN6 7JX; Pat Bowe, Douglas, Co Cork, Ireland; Mark Buckley, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1YS; Martin Hayes, Luton, Beds, LU2 8EZ; James Orsborn, Twyford, Berkshire; Kevin Bridges, Penrith, CA11 9DR; Paul Smillie, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland; J Elvin, East Barnet, Herts, EN4 8JD; N Strecha, Enfield, Middlesex, EN3 6EG; Andrew West, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3HR; David John Washer, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 9SL; Shez Smyth, Telford, Shropshire; Courtney Smith, Telford, Shropshire; Matthew Storstein, Awali, Bahrain, Arabian Gulf; Neil White, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH7 6UG; Richard Morrison, Nottingham, NG3 3BP; Laurence James, Truro, Cornwall TR3 7NZ; Stephen Fawkes, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6RF; Matthew Hodges, East Sussex, TN22 1HB; Phil Neesam, Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland, TS18 5PZ; Paul Humphries, Kent, ME10 SUW; Simon Barlow, Kingham, Oxon, OX7 6TH.





RAINBIRD HIGH FLIERS

Paper plane-making is still a popular craft, even in this technological day and age. A veritable host of airworthy creations flooded into the broom cupboard and I've been able to spend many a happy hour dive-bombing the Spiky Haired ones with your creations.

After hours of deliberation I decided upon a winner who will receive a radio-controlled glider and a copy of *Starglider*. **Simon Jones** of Up Holland in Lancashire is the lucky designer. A copy of *Starglider* accompanied by a chuck glider go to the ten runners-up . . .

Ray Graves, Milton Keynes, MK11 1NX; C A Pakes, Nottingham, NG13 8DF; Stephen Beveridge, Somerset, BA3 6RA; Stuart Pool, Swansea, West Glamorgan, SA2 7EX; Oliver Partridge, Essex, CO9 3RJ; Patrick Oliver, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8RT; Sean McConnell, Nottingham, NG5 8HX; Nicole Wilkinson, Wyken, Coventry, CV2 3JU; Jake Shepherd, Hartley, Kent, DA3 84W; R J Walliman, Surrey, RH9 8JW

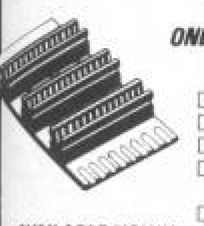
While no less than 50 runners up each receive a copy of the game . . .

Brett Buckley, Huddersfield, HD4 7LS; J Sayer, Liverpool, LY 6PZ; Bruce Duncan, Bucks, HP10 0ET; M Aubert, Exeter, EX4 8PQ; Tovare Jacobsen, 0390 Oslo 3, Norway; Peter Chocian, Crawley, RH10 3TB; Alan Miller, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 8BX; Michael Child, Gristhorpe, North Yorkshire; Robert A Boord, Fareham, Hants, PO14 2RZ; K Mander, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire; Sylvester, Malvern, Worcs, WR14 2ML; John A Elliott, Cheshire, SK14 2PL; Martin Dixon, Kent, TN12 6UG; Stefan Burnett, Leeds, LS12 5PA; David Wroe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 3HG; Robert Lec, North Humberside, HU14 3JW; Leyland Perree, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4RD; J Preou, Braintree, Essex CM7 6PT; Matthew Lewis, Harwich, Essex, CO12 3NP; Keven Gambold, Peterhead, AB4 7FA; Ryan Kelly, Cleckheaton, BD19 3BD; Mark Sexton, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 0EG; Terence Crawford, Lincs, LN9 5QH; Martin Smith, Sale, Cheshire, M33 3PA; Mark Barrett, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37 1TX; John Thompson, Lenzie, Glasgow, G66 4EN; Stephen Pitt, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3PH; Peter Brace, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE25 8NH; Paul Lines, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 8JX; John McKeever, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA5 5NT; Russell Hann, North Devon, EX39 5PL; Michael Cole, Llanelli, SA15 1QD; Colin McMillan, Perthshire, Scotland, PH2 9AF; Neil Wilkinson, Lightwater, Surrey, GU18 5YA; Graham Rogers, Leeds, LS12 1EJ; Peter Tyrell, Liverpool, L4 2SB; Egon Hansen, Hull, HU10 6NF; Johnathon Sharpe, Bucks, SL7 2JE; Jeroen Prins, Baarn 3741 XC, Holland; Stephen Foulkes, Sutton Coldfield, B75 5RT; Tim Veal, Bristol, Avon; Howard Joseph, Maidstone, Kent, ME19 5PS; Mr F Maloney, Wigan, WN2 2QE; A Boyd, Onchan, Isle of Man; Shaun Jackson, Cheshire, CW8 3CF; John Patrick Wallace, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 3ER; Graham Anderson, Lincs, LN5 9AU; Richard Vass, Devon, EX5 2TP; C M Gossling, Nottingham, NG3 1LP; G Shirodkar, Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 9PJ.

PARIS IN THE SPRINGTIME!

Diary-writers were asked to rack their brains back at Christmas-time and come up with a record of the week-end they would spend in Paris if they won the top prize in this competition run in conjunction with French software house, **Infogrames**. **D Conibear** of Swansea will soon be making the cross-channel trip. Everyone else who entered the competition collects a money-off voucher redeemable against an **Infogrames** game of their choice.

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DISK UTILITY CARTRIDGE



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Built-in Reset Switch

If you have a disk drive then you **need** a Diskmate!!

- ☐ Diskmate is a fast disk turbo loader that will speed up your normal loading software by 5 times.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL

- ☐ Fast format (approx. 10 seconds).
- ☐ Improved single stroke DOS commands ie. load, save, directory, scratch, etc.
- ☐ Redefined function keys: ie. load, load/run, list, directory, monitor, etc.
- ☐ Powerful toolkit commands: ie. old, delete, merge, copy, append, autonum, linesave etc., etc.

PLUS A powerful machine code monitor/disassembler. All the usual monitor commands: assemble, disassemble, move, find, compare, fill, number conversion etc., etc. **NB.** This is a full monitor, not a token effort like some available.

* Diskmate incorporates special switching techniques which make it "invisible" to the system. Therefore the fastload will work with more software than other types. In addition this makes the other commands including the monitor more powerful. For instance the monitor 'floats' and is able to look under ROMs and even under itself!

NEW

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Replacement Kernal
New upgraded routines! PLUS
Fast Format
Fast Save



POST FREE **£14.99**

Turbo Rom actually fits inside your computer and replaces the normal slow Kernal Rom with superfast disc loading routines, plus extended DOS commands.

- • Loads most programs at 5-6 times speed
- • Improved single key commands
- • Fits inside computer so all ports are free
- • Return to normal kernal at flick of switch
- • Fitted in minutes — no soldering usually needed (on a few C64's the old Rom may have to be de-soldered)

Turbo Rom I can be upgraded for £5 plus old chip.

NEW

smart cart ™



An 8K or 32K pseudo ROM cartridge

£14.99 8K version
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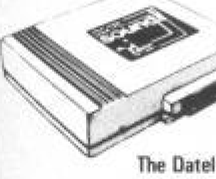
Now you can have a cartridge that you program as if it were computer RAM then acts as if it were ROM.

- ☐ Battery backed to last for upto 5 years (lithium battery). Simply load in the program and flick the switch. The cartridge can be removed and will retain the program just like ROM.
- ☐ Make autostart cartridges without the need for an EPROM burner.
- ☐ Can be switched on/off board from keyboard.
- ☐ 32K version offers 4 x 8K pages under software switching.
- ☐ Some knowledge of m/c is required but full instructions included.

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A comprehensive software package including
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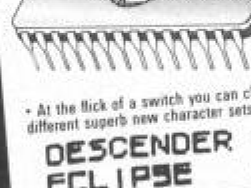
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Graphics – No Problem either.
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• At the flick of a switch you can choose between any of 4 different superb new character sets.

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ECLIPSE • FUTURE

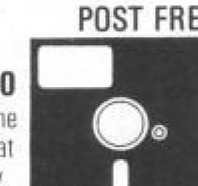
• For anyone who uses their printer often this chip is a must. It's quick and easy to use and the end results are impressive. YOUR COMMODORE Jan. '87. **

IT'S BACK

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TOOLKIT IV

THE ULTIMATE DISK TOOLKIT FOR 1541/1540



Toolkit IV has, for some time, been generally recognised as the best disk toolkit available. The only problem for Datel was that it was distributed by someone else!! So when the opportunity to obtain the rights came our way, we jumped at it. And what's more, in keeping with our general pricing policy, we are offering it at less than half the previous selling price. A disk toolkit is an absolute must for the serious disk user and TOOLKIT IV has more features than most for less:

DISK DOCTOR V2 – Read and write any track and sector including extra and renumbered tracks. Repair damaged sectors. Look underneath read errors.

HEADER/GAP EDITOR – Decodes and displays ALL header information including off bytes and header gap. Rewrite the entire header and header gap. Renumber sectors. Also edit any sector tail gap.

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Screen shots taken from various computer formats
Imagine Software (1984) Limited, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS. Telephone: 061-834 3939 Telex: 669977.
Distributed in France by Ocean France Telephone: 93-42-7144. Distributed in Germany by Rushware Telephone: 2101-70040.

50 COPIES OF LEVIATHAN ON OFFER!



The game I am playing at the moment is *Leviathan* from **English Software**. I'm kept well busy attacking mysterious LANDSCAPES in space which are inhabited by aliens, and judging by the number of enemy craft, a lot of them INHABIT the floating masses. Your task is the total ANNIHILATION of these nasties.

Piloting a fighter equipped with all the latest weaponry to SHOOT the aliens with, including LASERS, you have to run the GAUNTLET of WAVE after wave of hostile beaties lurking in a variety of ZONEs. You have to react quickly to ELIMINATE the bad guys. Some of the GROUND installations also fire at you, equally intent on your DESTRUCTION. Once your SMOKING lasers have destroyed all the alien craft in one zone, you TRANSFER to another.

As you may have guessed by now, all you have to do to win a copy of *Leviathan* is search through the wordsquare, looking for the words that appear in capital letters above.

Send your entries to **ZZAP LEVIATHAN MISSION, ZZAP TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**, and make sure they arrive before the 9th of April.

A	E	R	U	L	A	S	E	R	S	Q	N
U	L	A	N	D	S	C	A	P	E	S	A
R	I	N	C	U	M	D	X	Z	A	N	S
O	M	A	O	Z	O	N	E	B	R	S	N
N	I	N	K	E	K	E	W	A	C	H	O
A	N	N	I	H	I	L	A	T	I	O	N
D	A	R	N	I	N	G	V	A	T	O	R
N	T	E	H	I	G	L	E	N	Y	T	D
U	E	R	A	D	B	U	X	N	C	W	O
O	O	X	B	T	R	A	N	S	F	E	R
R	N	O	I	T	C	U	R	T	S	E	D
G	R	I	T	E	L	T	N	U	A	G	E

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

POST CODE ....

MENTAL PROCREATION

By Andrew Braybrook

Like all good prospective fathers, Andrew Braybrook finally decides upon a name for the new offspring. Uncle Steve continues counselling the Opus and the 64 in the hope that they will start talking to each other, and a program to double the speed of the C64 is written. There's more drama to writing a game than you find in an average episode of EASTENDERS, as the second part of Andrew Braybrook's diary reveals . . .

Friday 16th January
ST (Steve Turner) has been setting up the operating system on the Opus (called MSDOS) ready for our cross-assemblers, which assemble either Z80 or 6502 on a machine not running under those chips. Having obtained various library books on 8086 (the PC processor) and communications, we are hopeful that communications between our computers will be easy to set up. We just need to set up some leads from the Opus Centronics printer output (non-standard socket of course, courtesy of IBM), to the C64 and Spectrum. Two PCs running at the same time make a lot of noise with their cooling fans.

Monday 19th January
Did a nice sequence of eight sprites which fit on top of each other. They look very swish when colours are faded through them. Bit expensive on sprite usage though, maybe I can come up with a way of running something similar with characters.

Having seen Gary Liddon's sprite multiplexor on Saturday, I can't understand why his runs faster. Committed a no-no by using his method of building a table in the system stack so I can use faster instructions to read the table. It would have been very messy if it hadn't worked. Don't tell ST, I'd get the sack for misuse of the computer. It still isn't as fast as Mr Liddon's system, but his isn't doing as much yet. . . . I hope!

Tuesday 20th January
Discussed the possibilities of a game where the enemy show a bit of evolutionary behaviour, as the weaker ones get destroyed they are never replaced, but ones that get away grow stronger and randomly mutate, as featured on Horizon yesterday. Maybe even the graphics could be generated too, giving every game a different look, depending on the performance of the player in the particular game.

Scribbled some code for the moving background – looks like a lot of code with not much time to execute it in. I may have to use a 24 line screen rather than 25 to buy myself some extra time with the raster off the screen.

Also keyed in a machine code Centronics output routine for faster communication to the Spectrum. We're still awaiting the data sheets for the chip in the Spectrum interface, so it wasn't working too well – the Spectrum's a little slow at noticing that a byte has arrived.

" . . . it worked almost perfectly, except one set of lumps kept stepping backwards every now and again and some others left trails of debris behind them . . . "

Wednesday 21st January
Keyed in the moving background system and it worked almost perfectly, except one set of lumps kept stepping backwards every now and again and some others left trails of debris behind them. Didn't take long to fix though. This screen updating of thirty objects just about takes place while the raster is off-screen, so no flicker can possibly happen.

I've also been wondering whether to display the score on-screen and if so, how. Then I realised that I could just write the score in standard characters – I've always assumed that I'd have to do it with Sprites. Sprites may still cross the score but they will be on the move. I'm unhappy about using sprites in the border as it could be exploiting a video-chip bug. This may not work on some machines or it could cause damage.

Thursday 22nd January
Flushed with the success of yesterday's background routine, I set about defining what I want to see on the screen, the control mode required to run it, and how I'm going to achieve this. I need to be able to move in all directions, fire in all directions, dematerialise, and select quickly which of these I want to do, all from an eight-directional joystick and one fire button. I shall attempt to put this multitude of functions into the game without the use of windows, icons or mice, and only quietly muttering at the lack of foresight to put two independent buttons on a joystick.

Designed some more of the character set to show these various systems, I also think I've come up with the game name. As I was flipping through the dictionary for inspiration I came across 'Morpheus – God of Dreams'. It's about the right length, sounds nice, easy for advertisers to misspell and generally mysterious, so that's what the game will be called, **Morpheus**.

I'm also conscious that the on-screen display must be kept moving and changing to maintain interest. I think I'll need a more complex than average character update system to animate parts of the display with lots of frames of animation.

Friday 23rd January
No progress on **Morpheus** today, battled with US *Uridium*.

Monday 26th January
Spent much of the weekend working on US *Uridium*, and today I'm getting *Uridium+* ready for going to the US too: I'm sure it'll enjoy it there, it could do with a holiday.

It looks like the designers of the 8086 chip in the PCs are going for the January Mickey Mouse award, with its sixteen byte segmented memory arrangement. Any byte in memory can have thousands of different addresses. Very confusing.

Tuesday 27th January
Back to the real business of **Morpheus**. I want lots of different 'meanies', whatever they turn out to be, animal vegetable, mineral or atomic. What I want to do is build objects from lots of source objects, like building a sprite house from sprite bricks and sprite windows. By using X and Y reflections and specifying an artificial 'depth' or 'priority' for each image, I should be able to get proper animation with objects passing behind others in the same sprite. It will have to build the images in advance, say between levels rather than immediately as required – as combining up to eight images per frame of a sixteen frame sequence could take a lot of CPU wellie.

" . . . With the aid of a mega-soldering iron, pliers and our frustration brick we cracked it . . . "

Wednesday 28th January
Been thinking about yesterday's sprite combining system. It's important to think through the limitations of a system before writing it, in case it won't do what you want. It also gives me an opportunity to expand on the idea to explore what the system will do. I'll have to resurrect my sprite reversal routine from *Paradroid* which produces the large robot pictures. Reflecting multi-coloured images is not as straightforward as reflecting hi-res sprites.

ST and I battled with some parallel communications this afternoon to get the Opus talking to the C64. We had a rare collection of errors, including the C64 missing out bytes because it wasn't fast enough, the C64 duplicating bytes because it was too fast, total lock-outs where both machines were waiting for each other, and the C64 only receiving one byte per millenium. With the aid of a mega-soldering iron, pliers and our frustration brick we cracked it. We can transfer data at about one and a half kilobytes per second, which is the fastest the Opus will currently do. We should get it faster with our own dedicated routine, if ST wants to learn 8086, I don't.

Apparently on the Opus you can print in foreground (ie everything stops until it's finished) or in background, that is you can carry on as normal and the interrupts routines just get on with it. MSDOS takes the January Mickey Mouse award for its idea of background printing. it accepts keyboard input at a magnificent rate of one character every three seconds while background printing. Not what I'd call user transparent.

Thursday 29th January
Wrote a utility to read data from the Opus in ASCII format and convert it to machine-code as it reads it. Since it keeps getting checksum errors because it is missing bytes, I can only assume that I'm not getting back to read the next byte quickly enough. The Opus is like a machine gun and I don't have time to catch each bullet, polish it and place it neatly, I'll have to catch them all in a bucket and tidy them up while it's reloading. Most frustrating because it very nearly works.

Friday 30th January
Day off.

" . . . Further investigations reveal that a certain C64 operating system delights in polling the keyboard every 60th of a second, despite being told not to by me . . . "

Monday 2nd February
Re-arranged my Centronics receive code to read a series of bytes at a time, stop transmission and decode them. It still occasionally 'misses' six or seven bytes. It either works perfectly or misses a whole lot, nothing in between – this is suspicious. Further investigations reveal that a certain C64 operating system delights in polling the keyboard every 60th of a second, despite being told not to by me. This has only started since I've been calling the write character to screen kernal routine, CHROUT, which must be enabling the interrupts again. How good of it to take this decision all by itself! Thus my receiving success or failure depends on whether I get interrupted while reading data. The interrupt lasts for so long that I lose about six bytes. With a very small test file it seems about an evens chance, but a larger file would never get across intact. I can soon fix this, just tell the timer chip (the CIA) to stop screaming blue murder every 60th of a second, rather than just sticking cheese in the system's ears to stop it hearing and responding.

Now that it appears to be working it also explains why it didn't work last Thursday, which was a better system. Now I've changed it I'm not going back. Just like my macro assembler loaders, it'll type out full-stops as it loads, except mine will allow loading in RAM under the ROMs and protect against overwriting certain delicate areas in the machine.

The Opus is now playing up, it refuses to link some Z80 code for my test file: it just crashes the whole machine. Perhaps it knows that the C64 wouldn't know what to do with it anyway. That's it, the Opus is emulating the C64 perfectly, it crashes! I only wanted to use Z80 because ST has already keyed in some Spectrum routines.

Tuesday 3rd February
Completed work on my parallel data receiving program and tested it out by passing a test file down from the Opus. All appears good. Right, time to take the plunge, retire the old C64, to be replaced by the new Opus PC, (I've been using ST's Opus thus far), and connect it to the C128. The MPS801 printer will have to go as well since there just isn't room, Opae are big beasties indeed. The 1570 disk drive can sit on top of the Opus, connect it all together, light the blue touch paper and bingo, a Graftgold Development System.

Got a quick tutorial from ST on using the text editor and MSDOS in general. So begins the task of rekeying all that I've done on **Morpheus** so far into the Opus. It's nice talking to a man's computer where software is written with no space constraints – a mere 492K spare for editing files, another 392K on the RAM disk, two disk drives with about 360K each, and an operating system that does what you want, when you want – with no fuss! Brings back memories of the old IBM mainframe (when it was running full tilt after five o'clock with decent IBM terminals and CMS).

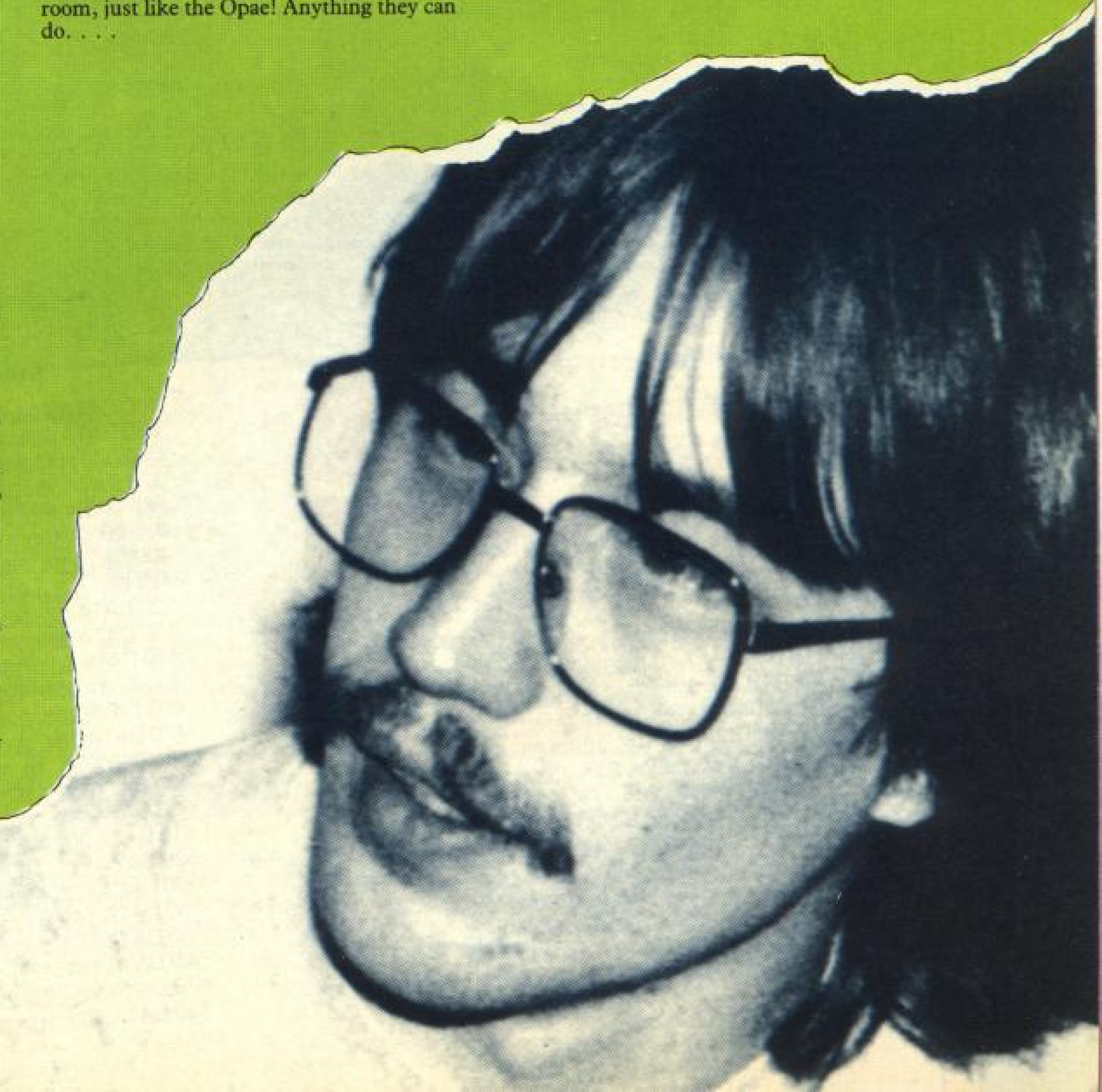
Three problems have since reared their ugly heads, *Easyscript* won't load, so I can't see what I'm going to type in on the Opus, and the old 1541 won't read any disks at all. It knows it's being retired to the great disk drive home in the sky, to become just another ordinary breeze-block. The third problem is the most serious though, the fan-heater's bust so it's blowing cold air all round the room, just like the Opae! Anything they can do. . . .

" . . . if God had intended us to use serial data, he'd have only put one bit in every byte . . . "

Wednesday 4th February
One quick amendment to the receiver system, don't allow it to load data over itself and crash, I've done that with my C64 assembler loaders a few times this week.

Some people may be saying "How can it take these people so long just to connect two computers together?" Whilst appreciating that it's not exactly on the forefront of technology and one of the selling points of computers is the ability to interface them to anything – just you try and find someone who'll stand up and admit that they've connected two different computers together in parallel. Many people 'in the business' seem to use serial links, but if God had intended us to use serial data, he'd have only put one bit in every byte. As we've already discovered, serial linkage is no easier than parallel, is slower, and has a worse-defined standard. We have connected an Opus PC-II to a C128 in parallel using only information in the Programmers Reference Guide, some timing and circuit diagrams of a Centronics printer and applied logic. We've now probably got one of the more advanced development kits in the country for micro software.

Thursday 5th February
Continued keying in my source code to the new assembler. It's mostly much more versatile then the CBM one, but it does have one or two inefficiencies. Whereas I used to type < or > signs for low or high bytes, I now have to key 'Low' or 'High' in full, not even 'Lo' or 'Hi' will do. I'm also learning to use the new proper full-screen editor. Imagine a delete key that actually deletes the character under the cursor, not the one before it: how revolutionary, it'll never catch on! I remember the IBM mainframe that I used to work on did that – a real home from home this ▶



is. Finally got my utilities all keyed in and my variables and macros. I made some improvements to some tacky bits of code whilst rekeying it so I wouldn't be able to check it against the original version when it's done, very clever I don't think. If anything goes wrong it'll be harder to find the errors. It's great being able to put huge comments in the code – on an 80 column screen it still looks tidy. It was impractical to get carried away on the C64 as it hampered loading time and took up too much space. All the source for one game used to take over 500 blocks on a disk, or about 120K.

Initial timing tests show that to assemble and download my utilities takes about half a minute, not fast by any means, but compared to about five minutes on the C64 it's great. It'll be interesting to see how long it takes on a finished program, which used to take the best part of half an hour on the C64. If it's still ten times faster it'll only take three minutes.

One thing about the assembler is that it really goes to town if it finds an error. It usually manages to find at least five things wrong on the line, just from one letter being mis-keyed. If it only printed four error messages it'd probably print a fifth moaning that it could only find four things wrong!

A final piece of good news, the fan heater is working again.

" . . . due to a certain wire not being connected at the Spectrum end, the Opus thought that the Spectrum had run out of paper . . . "

Friday 6th February

Feeling rather ill today, but it only hurts when I move. Struggled in to work and keyed in all the remaining source code to the Opus, assembled it, corrected all the typing errors, assembled it again and booted it down to the C128. It all ticks over very nicely.

Spent much of the afternoon looking for the bug that caused the sprites to flicker horrendously. Finally found it, I'd just mis-read one character from one screen while typing on the other.

ST found out why the Spectrum won't listen to the Opus whereas the C128 will, it's a good one this. Since the Opus thinks it is printing to a printer, and our micros are impersonating printers, due to a certain wire not being connected at the Spectrum end, the Opus thought that the Spectrum had run out of paper! Thus it wasn't sending data across. A simple soldering job cured that and the two are now happily communicating.

Hopefully by now some of you will have played the Competition Edition of *Paradroid* in the Christmas double pack. Being 50% faster than the standard edition, it certainly plays a lot more furiously. I discovered how to make *Paradroid* run fast after I finished *Alleykat*. I was experimenting with the double-speed CPU in the C128 which is an adaptation of the 6510, called the 8510. It can run at a clock speed of 2MHZ if required, but normally it runs at 1MHz for C64 compatibility.

Upon further investigation, I realised that the 6510 present in all C64s could also be encouraged to run at this higher speed by use of software. I have produced a BASIC listing to allow you to apply this discovery to your own software. Just key in the program and save it to tape or disk. RUN it, and then NEW it. Finally load in any game from cassette. Once loaded, it will run at up to double normal speed, prepare for a mega-fast game! Since the 6510 Accelerator upsets disk loading speeds, it cannot be used to speed up disk-based software yet, but I am working on a solution to this.

By the way, line 90 contains some cursor commands in quotes. The PRINTed line is 3 cursor downs, then NEW, then three cursor ups to put the word NEW on the CURRENT line just to remind you to NEW the program. All you do is press ENTER.

Monday 9th February.

It's been a slow day. Began by writing some more notes on the sprite combining system. I suppose the idea came from reading about 'Blitter' chips, the way you just point them at up to three sources of data, one destination for the finished data and tell it what logical operations to perform, and it does it. It can do anything from simple data copies to complex object plotting. Wish there was a blitter in the C64.

Now that I have a game name I can begin thinking about title screens. I've re-arranged some of my large character set to allow it to be used with my moving background system. I shall also need a snazzy high-score table of some kind.

Tuesday 10th February

Got to grips with the multi-layered grid that moves at different speeds, done with characters. Sadly it doesn't have CPU time to build and display it in real time, and not even at half-speed, doing half of the grid on each cycle. It is a nice effect though, so I'll have to work out another way of displaying it. It's a lot faster to debug with the source code in front of you on one screen and the game running on another.

Redrew the small-lettered character set and the game logo that will appear on-screen during the game to make them easier to read. It's the first multi-colour resolution character set that I've ever done, *Alleykat* was in hi-res but with a fancy Atari-emulation system to make it look like more colours.

" . . . I hate line numbers! They were only invented for punch cards so that if somebody shuffled them you could sort them out again . . . "

Wednesday 11th February

Re-organised yesterday's grid-drawing routine so that it calculates all the animation frames in advance and can then display them at any speed. Thus it takes very little CPU time to display and gives me time to run the moving blobfield and thirty-two sprites. Of course it does take an extra 4K of memory – you don't get something for nothing. The constant battle is always time against memory; you can write a routine that's fast but takes a lot of memory, or write it to take less memory but it executes a lot slower.

Re-arranged the character set (again) to group together all the pieces that are similar in what they will do. This is so that anything such as collision detection needs only to check a range of codes, not a series of individual codes dotted around all over the place.

Tried to think of a neat way of dematerialising the character set that hasn't been used . . . failed. I could switch in a new character set, or a new screen, or both. Maybe a *Uridium* dreadnought dissolve would look nice.

One thing about our new Opae, the editor has no line numbers. Great. I hate line numbers! They were only invented for punch cards so that if somebody shuffled them you could sort them out again. This is the 1980s, and we don't use punch cards on the C64, so why do we have to suffer line numbers? Mickey Mouse award for the Thirteenth Century goes to the inventor of line numbers, especially in BASIC programs.

Thursday 12th February

Wrote (on paper) and keyed in an object block plotter, which plots blocks of characters on screen with which I shall build a sort of mini-dreadnought. This is the ship that the player will fly. At biggest it could be twenty-seven characters wide by n-n-n-nineteen high! Should give the player a feeling of superiority. I've got the 'Player X' words and the game logo put on screen using this block plotter, as well. Looking at it now I reckon I should put the moving grids up using the same plotter, which will save on code. However it can only handle the first 128 characters, because I use the top bit as an end-of-column flag. The grid uses higher character codes.

Took some screen shots this week, but the processor always takes at least a week to do black and white so I'll send them to ZZAP! next month.

Since our printer has been disconnected for taking up too much room on the desk, this diary will have to go home for printing.

To be continued . . .

```
6510 ACCELERATOR LISTING
10 B=0
20 FOR X=49152 TO 49463
30 READ C
40 B=B+C
50 POKE X,C
60 NEXT X
70 IF B<>44878 THEN PRINT "ERROR": END
80 SYS 49152
90 PRINT "<CD> <CD> <CD> NEW <CU> <CU> <CU>"
100 END
200 DATA 174, 48, 3, 172, 49, 3, 142, 46
210 DATA 3, 140, 47, 3, 162, 74, 160, 192
220 DATA 142, 48, 3, 140, 49, 3, 162, 245
230 DATA 160, 192, 32, 188, 192, 162, 6, 160
240 DATA 193, 32, 188, 192, 169, 128, 141, 225
250 DATA 192, 160, 3, 202, 208, 253, 136, 208
260 DATA 250, 206, 32, 208, 173,, 225, 192, 56
270 DATA 233, 1, 72, 238, 32, 208, 104, 141
280 DATA 225, 192, 208, 229, 169, 37, 141, 5
290 DATA 220, 96, 201, 0, 208, 8, 165, 186
300 DATA 201, 1, 240, 5, 169, 0, 108, 46
310 DATA 3, 32, 23, 248, 162, 26, 160, 193
320 DATA 32, 188, 192, 169, 11, 141, 17, 208
330 DATA 169, 48, 141, 225, 192, 160, 0, 202
340 DATA 208, 253, 136, 208, 250, 206, 225, 192
350 DATA 208, 245, 169, 34, 133, 192, 169, 55
360 DATA 133, 1, 169, 27, 141, 17, 208, 173
370 DATA 134, 2, 41, 15, 168, 172, 134, 2
380 DATA 185, 36, 193, 141, 243, 192, 162, 226
390 DATA 160, 192, 32, 188, 192, 165, 197, 201
400 DATA 64, 240, 250, 174, 46, 3, 172, 47
410 DATA 3, 142, 48, 3, 140, 49, 3, 169
420 DATA 27, 141, 17, 208, 169, 64, 141, 5
430 DATA 220, 76, 116, 164, 142, 203, 192, 140
440 DATA 204, 192, 160, 0, 140, 225, 192, 172
450 DATA 225, 192, 185, 226, 192, 73, 255, 72
460 DATA 238, 225, 192, 240, 11, 32, 210, 255
470 DATA 104, 201, 13, 240, 3, 76, 199, 192
480 DATA 96, 19, 185, 176, 170, 177, 187, 223
490 DATA 250, 190, 175, 173, 182, 179, 223, 185
500 DATA 176, 176, 179, 101, 242, 201, 202, 206
510 DATA 207, 223, 190, 188, 188, 186, 179, 186
520 DATA 173, 190, 171, 176, 173, 242, 189, 166
530 DATA 223, 190, 177, 187, 173, 186, 168, 223
540 DATA 189, 173, 190, 166, 189, 173, 176, 176
550 DATA 180, 242, 172, 186, 190, 173, 188, 183
560 DATA 182, 177, 184, 242, 111, 250, 227, 96
570 DATA 99, 225, 224, 97, 126, 106, 105, 104
580 DATA 103, 102, 101, 100, 0, 0, 0, 0
```

ZZAP! Flash

STARLIGHT EXPRESS

Meanwhile over on Ariolasoft's **Starlight** label comes the futuristic *Dogfight 2187*, a 3D wire-frame shoot 'em up with a vertical split screen that reveals the two sides of the action. Fast 3D vector graphics, real time one or two player action and an amazing soundtrack from **We Music** are all planned for the new game.

Deathscape is another **Starlight** game under production, in which you take the role of one of the elite Sol Fed pilots. At some point in their lives, all Sol Fed pilots engage in a Deathscape battle: A peculiar way of settling political differences between the Sol Fed and their sworn enemies – the Vargs. Usually there are standard rules which both sides obey – only this time the rules have taken a turn for the worse. You are not only faced with one foe, as in a normal battle, but a whole marauding fleet of Varg ships. Fight for your freedom and the salvation of the Sol Federation while you listen to Ben Dalglish's accompanying soundtrack.



During in April **Starlight** will release a 3D arcade adventure game dubbed Greyfell – the legend of Norman. Norman is a simple pussy cat . . . but with a passion for danger. Greyfell tells the story of Norman's quest to locate the Orb of life to release the land of Greyfell from the odious grip of the evil Mauron. Greyfell is currently undergoing the final tweaking by the programming team, Cornucopia Software, and should be in the shops by April priced at £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 on disk.

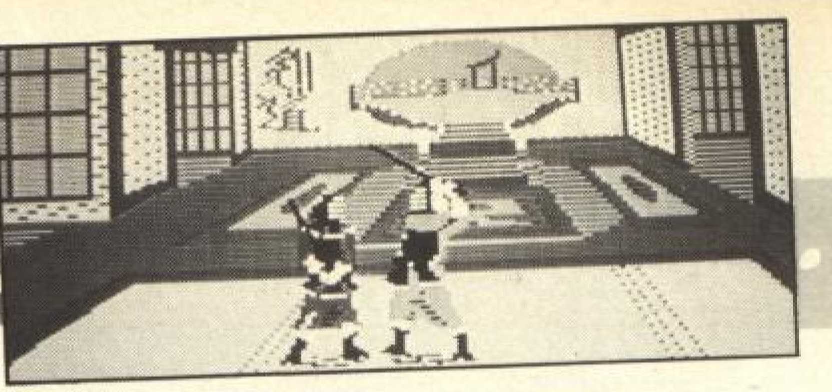
MORE GAMES TO GET YOUR TEETH INTO

Snappy software house **Piranha** have announced that no less than seven new titles are in preparation for the Commodore – mainly TV and comic licences. *Trapdoor II* is the follow-up to the immensely popular *Trapdoor* featuring that loveable blue blob Berk. Once again designed and written by Don Priestly, the sequel promises to be lots of fun.

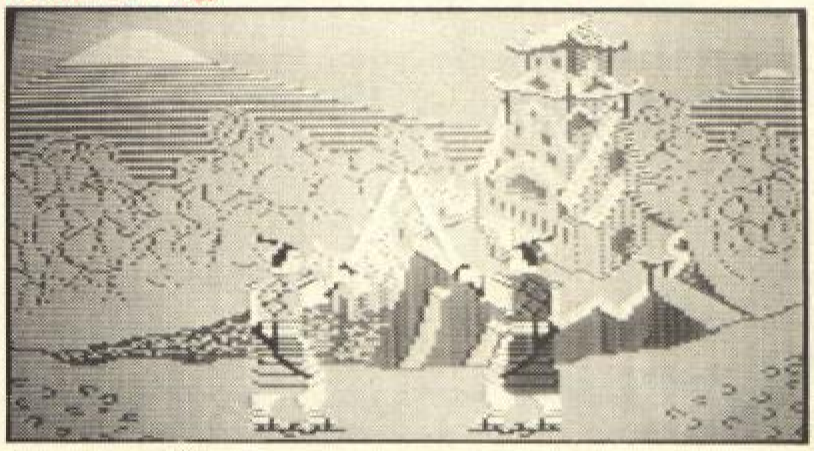
Rogue Trooper is fighting his way into the 64 at the moment – a 3D arcade adventure involving a fair bit of killing has appeared on other machines and should be ready for review here shortly. *Judge Death* is another character from the pages of 2000AD who is due to make an appearance in a **Piranha** program, and also from the comic world comes *Roy Of The Rovers*. What form the game will take is still undecided, as in recent episodes Roy appears to be more concerned about the tints in his hair and the tightness of his jeans rather than football!

From the cartoon world comes *Yogi Bear*, sure to feature big, colourful graphics and a bigger sense of humour. Can you bear the wait?

Delta 4 are developing a spoof adventure based around The Great American Detective: it's likely to be called *PI* and should be with us by the end of Spring. Finally there's *Battle* – an imaginatively-titled game about a battle . . .



You and your opponent engage in a bit of Kendo fighting: one stage in the Samurai Trilogy



With a Oriental temple as a backdrop yet more fighting for the supreme title of Samurai War Lord.

MORE NINJAS FROM GREMLIN

Not content with producing two ninja orientated games, *Way of the Tiger* and *Avenger*, **Gremlin** are releasing a new game called *The Samurai Trilogy* – which contains a triple dose of the martial arts. The action takes place deep in the Orient as you attempt to claim the title of Samurai War Lord. Three opponents have to be defeated at Kendo, and three more at Karate before the player can actually attempt the Samurai fencing challenge.

Your opponents are introduced with a few biographical notes which helps to assess their weaknesses, and an element of strategy comes into the game-play: you have to allocate your resources to a set of attributes and train for each fight.

MASTERTRONIC ARCADIA

Mastertronic have recently announced that they are going into the arcade business – they are accomplishing this via a subsidiary company, **Arcadia Systems Inc**. Work is currently being carried out on a handful of games, and the first three should make their debut in New Orleans at the end of March. **Mastertronic** aren't planning to move any existing computer games 'up' to arcade machines – previous attempts by other companies proved less than successful (apparently *Boulderdash* made an appearance in the Japanese arcades along with a *Defender* clone that started life on a home micro, but neither game proved very successful in the coin-op world).

Obviously, licences will be available for **Arcadia** games, and Mastertronic may well end up producing versions for home computers. More news when we have it . . .

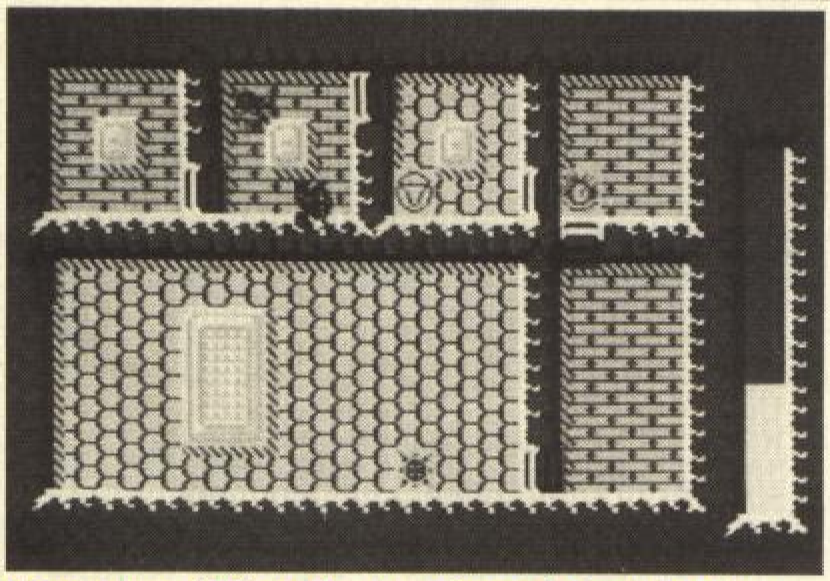
PIGGY ANTICS FROM CRL

Much attention seems to be focused on comics, in the current rush for licences. **CRL** have snapped up the rights to OINK!, a bizarre publication featuring, among other things, the whacky goings on in the pig world. In the game planned by **CRL**, you'll take control of OINK!'s Editor, Uncle Pigg, as he desperately attempts to get an issue together. He's got to cope with the likes of Rubbishman and Pete and his amazing Pimple. At the end of the day Uncle Pigg is awarded a new position on the OINK! staff ranging from Teaboy to Managing Editor, according his success factor. **CRL** are also almost ready to release the long-awaited *Cyborg* – a full review should appear next issue if all goes well.

ZZAP! ERRATUM

In the rush to the printers last month, someone forgot to add the Sizzler logo to Julian's review of *Football Fortunes*. So, to make up for it, here's a DIY cut-out and keep Sizzler award sticker. Cut around the dotted lines, add some glue and plop the Sizzler sticker you've just made on the review in last month's issue. Done that? Good – Sorry **CDS**!





Froggy actions with Mervyn the clumsy Sorcerer's Apprentice who mistakingly turned himself into a frog explores the dungeons ready to kill of the evil Wizards

HEWSON GO HOPPING MAD

Hewson's next release for the C64, *Ranarama*, is a *Gauntlet* variant with amphibian overtones.

The plot is based around a Sorceror's apprentice called Mervyn – who, whilst playing around with an aphrodisiac potion, unwittingly changed himself into a Frog. This proved quite fortunate though, because at that very moment Mervyn's dungeons were invaded by hordes of evil Wizards and their minions – ignoring the amphibous Mervyn, the Wizards took over the dungeons and killed the frail old Sorceror.

Mervyn's task is to travel through the eight level dungeons, killing off the opposing Wizards and collecting their magical runes. The runes can be swapped for spells at special points dotted about the playing area, and improved weapons can also be obtained to help Mervyn in his quest.

Ranarama follows a flick-screen *Gauntlet* format. The screens are divided into rooms that may contain generators or mystical floor Glyphs. The inside of a room can only be seen once it has been entered (*Paradroid* style).

Ranarama should arrive in the ZZAP! office well in time for a full review next month, and should be on sale shortly for the spellbinding price of £8.95 on cassette and £12.95 on disk. Magic.

OCEAN HAT TRICK

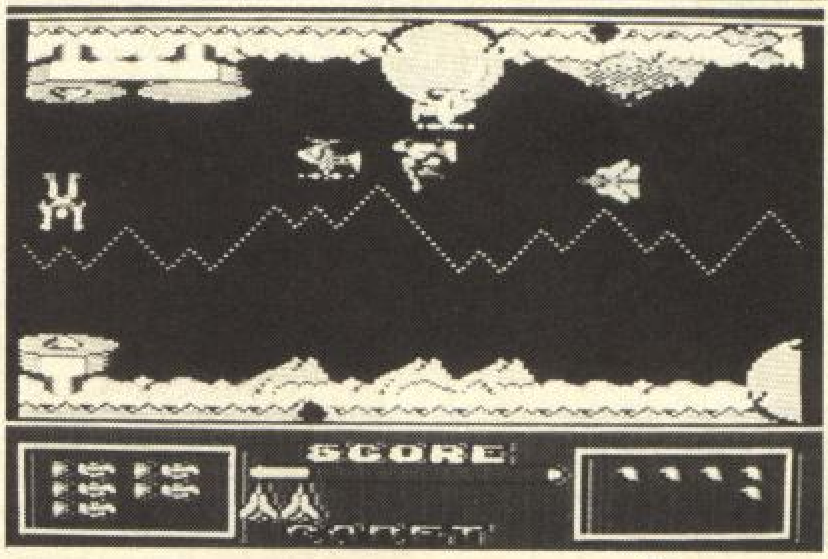
A slightly bizarre 3D arcade adventure, *Head Over Heels* is due from **Ocean** any day now.

Created by Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond, who brought such classics as *Match Day* and *Batman* to the Spectrum, *Head Over Heels* features two characters from the planet Freedom – Head Mouth and Heels Foot. The two races that populate the planet Freedom enjoy a symbiotic relationship –the Head creatures form a composite animals with the Foot beings by perching on their shoulders. Unfortunately, on their latest adventure the two heroes have been separated and cast into two cells on the evil planet of Blacktooth.

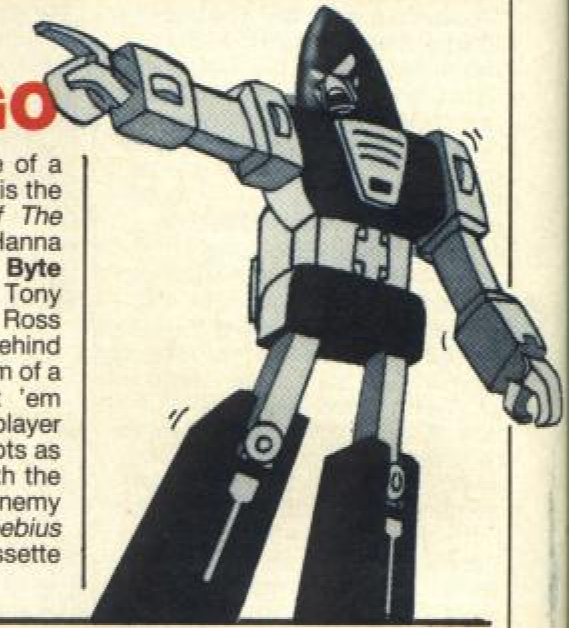
The objective is to reunite Head and Heels, solve a series of puzzles and then head for home – alternatively they can attempt to steal the crown from the Blacktooth Emperor, or they can go the whole hog and steal not only the crown of Blacktooth but also the crowns from the four slave planets of the Blacktooth empire. Head and Heels' adventures take them across the five planets in the Blacktooth Empire – each planet has a different graphical theme but they're all displayed in a similar ornate 3D perspective. *Head Over Heels* is expected to emerge from **Ocean** sometime this April at £8.95 on cassette.

Following the success of Top Gun, the film, Ocean are releasing an air-to-air combat simulation featuring two fighter planes, displayed using the wire-frame technique. Battle it out with the computer or a friend to decide who becomes the Top Gun. The screen is split vertically to show the action as viewed from the cockpits of the two planes. Out soon at the topping price of £8.95 on cassette.

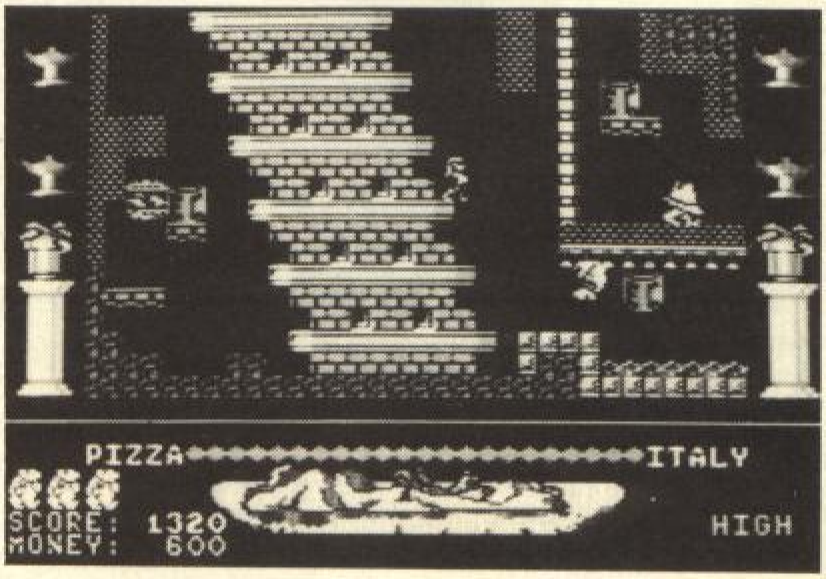




GOBOTS ARE GO-GO



Ariolasoft are on the verge of a couple of releases. The first is the long-awaited *Challenge Of The Gobots*, taken from the Hanna Barbera cartoons. **The Byte Engineers**, comprising Tony Crowther, Keith Blake and Ross Goodley are the team behind *Gobots*, which takes the form of a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. The game-play sets the player in control of the goody Gobots as they attempt to contend with the evil opposition of the enemy Gobots. *Gobots – On the Moebius Strip* is due out soon on cassette for £9.95.



MONTY'S STILL RUNNING

Calling all platform freaks! Monty Mole, hero of *Wanted Monty Mole* and *Monty on the Run* is heading for more adventures in his latest epic *Auf Wiedersehen Monty* from **Gremlin Graphics**. Monty is still on the run from Intermole, and now they've caught up with him in Gibraltar where Monty has taken refuge following his jailbreak. Monty needs to raise enough money to buy a secluded Greek island – Montos. Travelling across Europe, Monty has lots of tasks to complete: the Mona Lisa has to be stolen and sold, a car repaired and entered in a Grand Prix – and a Swiss bank account opened to stash all the loot earned for these little chores . . .

Auf Wiedersehen Monty is nearly complete, and has been written by the original Monty creator, **Pete Harrap** – it's your last chance to see the Mole in action, so you'd better start saving up now! Don't expect an easy game, though: Pete's put together some super-tricky puzzles and pixel-perfect leaping is the order of the day.

You are invited to join the MURDER CLUB, but be careful you could end up.



"YES, IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT... A PERFECT NIGHT FOR MURDER"

"I Hercule Holmes, had gotten used to nights like this. As the world's greatest detective and resident house dick of the infamous Gargoyle Hotel, I've made a living looking for the subtle signs of impending foul play. Gloomy weather, blood curdling screams, gunshots, empty bottles of poison, bodies tumbling down stairs, a mutilated corpse or even an axewielding maniac might slip right by the untrained private eye. But to a master sleuth like myself, these telltale signs can only mean one thing. The Murder Club has just checked in!"

"The Murder Club?' Yes, the Murder Club! Five of the world's bestselling murder mystery writers who transpose their fictional pulp plots into real-life murder and mayhem. Once again then have convened for their annual reunion here at the Gargoyle Hotel. And once again the dark, damp halls will echo with the cries of 'Don't shoot!', 'I've been poisoned!', 'Who stabbed me?', 'I've been shortsheeted!', and 'Who took all the hot water?' Yes, with the Murder Club as tonight's guests, more than the plumbing will be amiss!"

"Each member of The Murder Club will try to bump off the others and lay down claim to the crown of 'World's Greatest Murderer'. But it will not be a piece of quiche! For these brilliant criminal minds must match wits with moi, Hercule Holmes! I have only until midnight to discover the would-be murderer, victim, murder weapon and the scene of the crime."

"At my disposal will be every imaginable piece of high tech crimestopping gadgetry known to sleuthdom: minicameras, hidden bugs, even wire taps. Yet all these modern electronic wonders cannot replace my inherent ability as a born detective... instincts passed from generation to generation in the Holmes family.

Therefore, I accept the challenge. I will uphold the family honour! Before this night is over I will prevent a murder or be murdered trying! If I fail, one of the illustrious members of the Murder Club will surely be killed... yes Killed Until Dead!"

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ACCOLADE

ALIENS

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

Alien is back . . . and this time it's not alone!

Ripley, the only survivor of the doomed star freighter Nostromo, is picked up floating in deep space. Woken from the solitude of her hyper sleep-capsule, she is taken to a giant complex high above the Earth. There she is interrogated by disbelieving officials about her tale of parasitic creatures, capable of growing within, and eventually consuming, their human hosts.

By now, the remote planet upon which the crew of the Nostromo first encountered the Alien has been peopled by space engineers and their families. When contact with them is lost, it is Ripley who reluctantly agrees to lead a select team of marines to investigate.

Ripley, the erratic Gorman, Marine Hicks, Bishop the android, Vasquez (the feminist Rambo), and Company man Burke, have blasted their way into the colonists' base. The operation is coordinated from a MTOB (Mobile Tactical Operations Bay) set up near the crew's landing point. You control individuals on the team from the security of the MTOB – directing them towards any part of the base or ordering them to stand and fight against the Aliens. The Marines are equipped with video cameras and smart guns that follow the gun sight that appears on the viewscreen – the camera carried by the Marine under you control generates the main display on the control console, and can be panned around the current location.

Progress is made by passing through a series of corridors and rooms, inter-connected by doors that may be unlocked, sealed, or blasted through. However, once a door has been destroyed it offers no further protection against Alien intrusion.

Aliens move about the base, leaving bio-mechanical growth in their wake. If this is not cleared, it grows to close exits, block entrances and spawn Face Huggers



This is really quite good. There is a nice tense atmosphere generated as you progress toward the Queen's chamber, and the Aliens come thick and fast. The graphics are good – not exceptionally eye-catching, but functional. The backgrounds scroll quickly and the Alien characters work fairly well, but the crew portraits are disappointing: a digitised picture would have been much neater. The lack of a decent soundtrack also lets it down – background music or the sound of heartbeats would have helped generate even more atmosphere. Aliens could have been better, but should still provide a good few hours of Alien blasting.

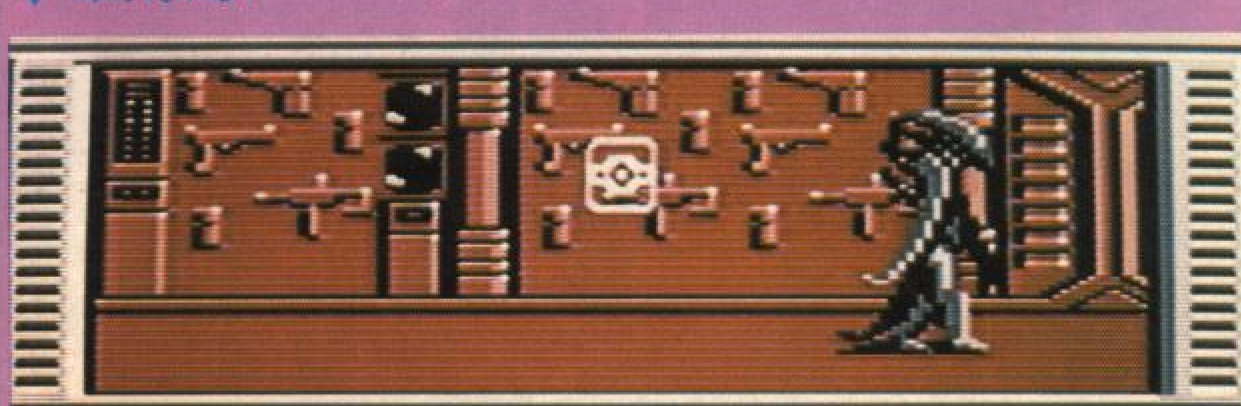


With only two crew members remaining, the chances of success look slim – especially if Bishop isn't quick enough with his trigger finger . . .

Not an Alien in disguise, but a harmless – and extremely helpful – child called Newt



You're in the armoury now (ouch) . . . an Alien casually walks past Ripley's gunsight





Aliens surprises me – it's the first film tie-in I've seen that actually captures the flavour of its celluloid counterpart. The action doesn't contain enough variety, but it is atmospheric and engrossing – although the overall effect would have been enhanced greatly by the inclusion of a heartbeat and radar blip (instead of the hum). Strategy doesn't play a great part, but a fair bit of forethought is required to synchronise the movements of the team through the complex – and keep them alive! There are a few things about Aliens that irritate me though. For example, the six characters all behave exactly the same – it would have been better if they had their own personality and charcteristics. Also, Bishop the android tires, but he shouldn't – he is synthetic after all. Still, these are minor gripes – congratulations to Electric Dreams for succeeding in an area where so many other companies have failed.





An Alien Face-Hugger takes a fancy to Ripley – so, to show its affection it leaps at her face, in an attempt to impregnate her with Alien seed . . .



After a very brief gestation period, the Alien egg inside Ripley's stomach has hatched and resulted in an unwanted Alien birth . . .

and Eggs. Aliens attack on sight, their presence being indicated by the high pitched note of a proximity meter. The further the Marines pass through the base, the more active the Aliens become.

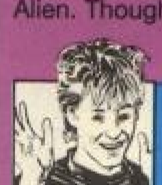
Smart guns are used to cut through bio-mechanical growth, to blast locks and doors and to destroy Aliens – a well-aimed shot to the head, or several to the body disposes of an intruder. Remember, the Company pays credits for Alien corpses. Use your weapons sparingly, as ammunition is limited and can only be replenished by dangerous, time-consuming ventures to the Armoury. And be warned, the acidic blood that dying Aliens spill is fatal – don't attempt to pass through it.

Life status bars appear on the MTOB console for individual squad members to indicate their stamina reserves – these are depleted by every move they make. Should the status bar begin to pulse beneath a squad member's name, exhaustion is approaching and rest is the only alternative to death. The number of the room each Marine currently occupies appears by the status bars.

A crew member confronted by an Alien has to kill it immediately – or face capture, in which case the corresponding status bar turns yellow. Survival then depends solely upon the destruction of the guard Alien by another squad member. Should a rescue attempt fail, or not be launched, the captive squad member is quickly impregnated with an Alien egg, and their status bar turns purple or pink. Death follows rapidly . . .

Ripley's task is to pass through the base with as many of her squad as possible and reach the breeding chamber of the Queen Alien. Though your main aim is to reach the Queen's Chamber and destroy its occupant, vital parts of the base must be defended; the Armoury that supplies the ammunition, to which each character must periodically return; the Control room, that provides lighting; and the Generating room, that provides light and power, are all vital to your cause. Without them, your ultimate task is hindered . . . if not rendered impossible.

As you move from room to room, watch out for the little girl Newt, the only surviving colonist. She may attempt to hide, but credits are earned when she is spotted.



Film tie-ins have been the worst type of computer program – bad gameplay and terrible execution usually fail to capture the atmosphere of the film. *Aliens*, however, is an exception. It's exciting to play, and captures the film's atmosphere very well. The gameplay is pretty tough going, and a few tactics have to be worked out if the mission is to be accomplished. Even though *Aliens* is good, there is still room for improvement – good sound (like the blap, blap noise of the trackers in the film) would have given the game an incredible atmosphere. A really annoying niggle is the keyboard layout – having M as a quit key is a stupid idea, especially as it's right next to the space bar which gets pressed a lot during the game. Apart from these detractions, *Aliens* is the best film tie-in to date – and a good game to boot.

PRESENTATION 66%
Useful map supplied, but no demo mode or options, and the restart key is awkwardly positioned.

GRAPHICS 81%
Effective room interiors and Aliens, and some neat visual effects.

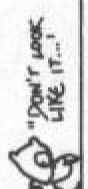
SOUND 27%
Very limited: no music and few spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Easy to get into, and the action makes repeated play compulsive.

LASTABILITY 76%
Enormous complex to explore and a strong urge to 'get even further this time'.

VALUE 76%
Slightly overpriced, but fans of the film should be satisfied.

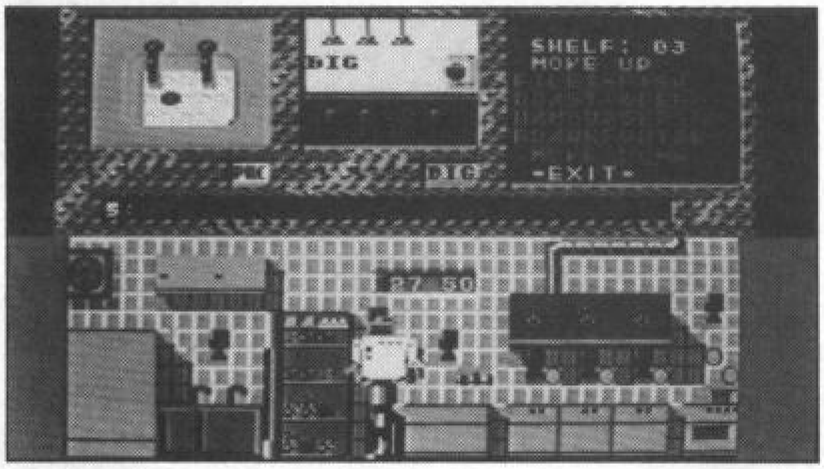
OVERALL 81%
The best film tie-in to date, and a good game to boot.



THE BIG DEAL

Ariolasoft/Radarsoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Tired of cleaning out the sewers, Floyd the droid has been refurbished and sent to work in the more hygienic atmosphere of a BIG (Big In Gastronomy) kitchen. Here he attempts to prove himself capable of coping with the hustle and bustle of a busy fast-food restaurant, where the orders are coming in thick and fast.





There's no denying that this is original, but it's over-complicated . . . and very dull with it. The problem lies in Floyd's control method – it's extremely difficult to get him to do anything you want him to. The long-winded instructions don't help, and frustration sets in after a couple of goes. It's a shame really – there's some quite reasonable graphics and sound here, which are let down by the frustratingly fiddly gameplay. Look elsewhere if you're after an enjoyable and addictive game.

Poor old Floyd's not totally automated though, and he still needs help in completing his tasks – this is where you come in. Floyd has many operations which are accessed by using the joystick-operated menu system.

The kitchen is pictured at the bottom of the screen and scrolls with Floyd as he goes about his business. It is fully fitted with all the latest in modern conveniences, and has heaps of storage space. There's also an overhead view of the units, showing if hotplates or sinks are in use. Above this there is a view of the serving counter which shows customers arriving. As they sit down, their order scrolls along a message bar and is stored in Floyd's memory, allowing you to keep track of the meals which require preparation.



Read the instructions for *The Big Deal* and you can immediately tell that it is going to be like – frustrating! There are an immense number operations to be carried out, all made worse by the fact that you are under pressure to serve the customers that arrive at a hectic rate. I don't find this sort of game enjoyable – it merely mimics the sort of hassle we can all do without. This is a pity because the game is well implemented and looks very smart. Let's hope Floyd III gets his act together.

Floyd has to be guided through every step of the meal's preparation, including finding the ingredients, cleaning, cutting and cooking. Memory is not our hero's strong point, but he can be taught how to cook up to three different dishes, and the next time these are ordered Floyd is able to execute them on his own.

As orders begin to accumulate, meals have to be prepared within a time limit. If Floyd fails to meet this deadline, or the customer gets annoyed and hurls abuse. If this does not hurry Floyd along, then the customer hurls something heavier at Floyd's head, and then leaves – somewhat disgruntled at the poor service. The damage caused by this assault must be repaired, wasting even more of the serving robot's valuable time.

Standards are high in Floyd's company, and slacking is not tolerated. Repeated failure to prepare orders in time results in Floyd receiving his cards, and the game ends with our hero joining the ranks of the unemployed.



No messing about here – you're thrown right in at the deep end. Whether you understand it or not, the main problem is working out a logical order in which to complete the tasks, and where they can be done most efficiently. Slowly, the game begins to reveal itself, and after consulting the instructions several times, the essential jobs such as selecting food and preparation can be understood. Unfortunately that's as far as I managed to get – the instructions are somehow incomplete. The customer orders do tend to pour in a bit fast, so it's difficult to keep track of what you're supposed to be doing. If you're prepared to persevere with this, it may prove interesting – but don't expect too much from it.



PRESENTATION 78%
Unusual control method, which takes time to master, and lots of instructions.

GRAPHICS 61%
Generally fair with some neat touches.

SOUND 59%
Two tunes – one barely bearable, the other pleasant.

HOOKABILITY 42%
Tricky to grasp the serving techniques – lots of reading and mistakes to be made before any form of proficiency is gained.

LASTABILITY 62%
Not overly varied, but quite rewarding – if you can be bothered to get to grips with the control method.

VALUE 50%
A lot to pay for the 'pleasure' of computerised hassle.

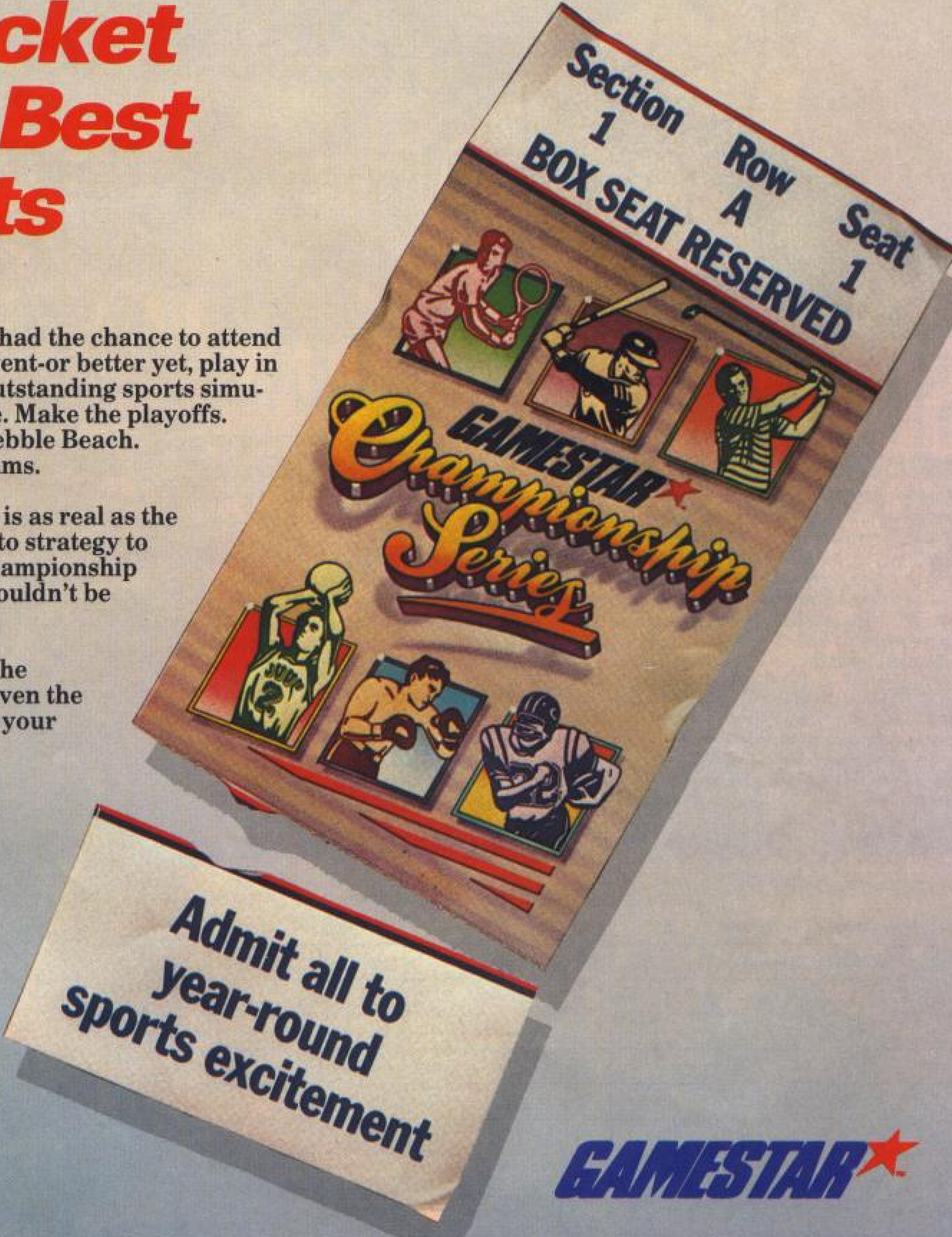
OVERALL 57%
Original, but lacking instant appeal and lasting satisfaction.

Your Ticket To The Best In Sports

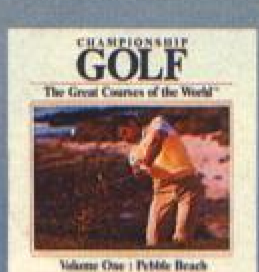
When was the last time you had the chance to attend a championship sporting event-or better yet, play in one? Gamestar's series of outstanding sports simulations give you that chance. Make the playoffs. Play in the final round at Pebble Beach. Compete against the top teams.

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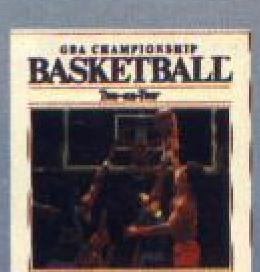
For the very best in sports-the excitement, the challenge, even the championship–Gamestar is your ticket.



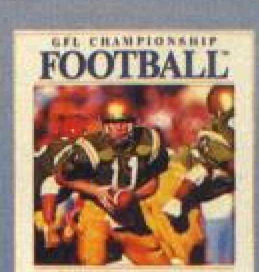
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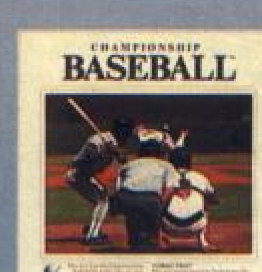
IBM PC, PCjr and Tandy 1000, Commodore Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST and compatible computers.



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SARACEN



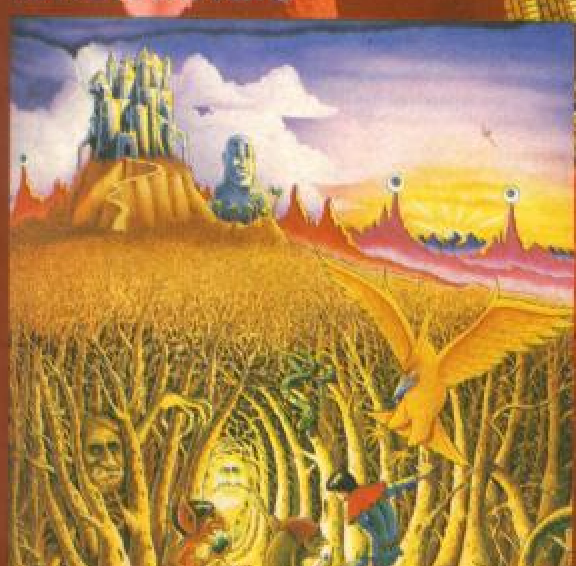
From the blazing deserts of the Sahara and Gobi, the mystical palaces of the Middle East and age old encampments of bedouin tribesmen, came a warrior race feared by all that fled before them. Outstanding horsemen, fearless in battle, driven to destruction by a Holy fervour, the Saracen warrior was the scourge of the people's of Europe and North Africa.

A warrior race that ran unchallenged until a class of Teutonic and Norman gladiators, the noble knights of England, France and Germany gathered together in a united cause to defeat this foe.

Thus the Crusaders were formed and one in particular, Ilan the Mighty, set forth to rout the threat of these murdering infiltrators and put paid to their threat once and for all. And so we see chronicled the Holy Wars, an eternal struggle of bloody encounters between these warring factions and within this all action adventure you have the opportunity to take on the mantle of the mighty Ilan in his battle to conquer the Saracen horde and their charmed fortress.

Or will you call quits when faced with the challenge from a time beyond recall or an age when chivalry and honour reigned supreme or even the Wild, Wild West where men were men.

BLACK MAGIC

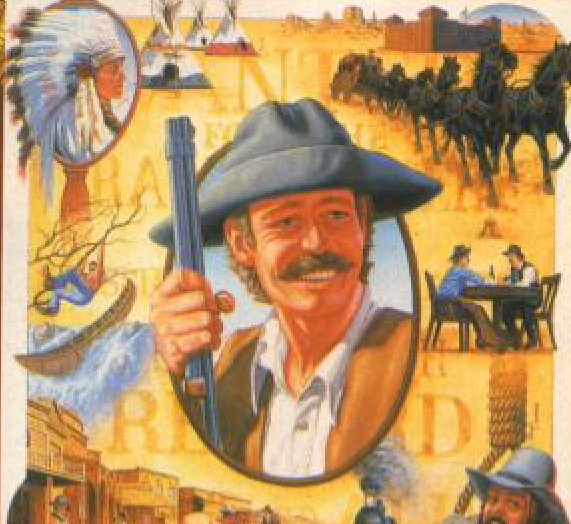


Born to a life in a world of gloom, to a people stricken with terror in fear of Zahgrim the evil warlock and his murderous minions, the future does not appear to hold much hope.

Yet in ages past, in a time when the magician Anakar protected this land: life was good, food was plentiful and the people happy. Happy that is until the skills of the ageing Anakar proved no match for the black magic powers of Zahgrim whence the kindly magician found himself banished within the petrified body of a mammoth swamp monster. From there he has surveyed the destruction of this once beautiful land, powerless to act or defend its inhabitants. But as with all evil there is a secret to its undoing the innocence of youth, the might of good.

Legend would have it that you've been blessed with these qualities but do you have the courage to meet the challenge?

GUNSLINGER



Dust off your Levis, grease down your six guns here's a saddle sore adventure straight from the annals of classic Wild West history. As retired Texas Ranger, Kip Starr, your bravery and cunning is once more called into action to rescue a friend from his early grave as a result of an unfortunate meeting with a Mexican hangman's noose. But as in all the best tales no folkhero is created without a nailbiting shootout with the Dalton Brothers, a hairaising encounter with uprising Indians, a perilous excursion across unexpected waterfalls and a weary journey that takes you across murderous wastelands, down danger filled mineshafts, through eerie ghostowns and finally brings you to rest in inhospitable Mexico.

You don't need to look to the future for action packed adventure the Wild West has seen enough thrills and spills for you never to want more.

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BLACK MAGIC	Tape	Disk
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DELTA

Thalamus, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Deep in an area of uncharted space lies a strange alien region known only as 'Delta'. Several ships belonging to the Terran Merchant Fleet have gone missing while flying through this mysterious area, and it has been rumoured that the Hsiffan Khanate, dreaded opponents of Terra, are operating from within its confines. The powers that be have decided to send a fighter pilot to investigate, and, bored with your current position, you decide to volunteer.



Delta is very impressive. The graphics are superlative, the effects are stunning and the music is nothing short of amazing. Delta's most impressive feature though, is the enormous amount of objects whizzing around the screen . . . bullets, rocks, enemy craft and swirling aliens – the action gets incredibly busy, and you really need the extra weaponry to survive. The thirty-two levels are varied, and there are some really neat ideas to surprise and thwart the player. If you're into shoot 'em ups, take a look at this – you can't get much better within the horizontally scrolling format.



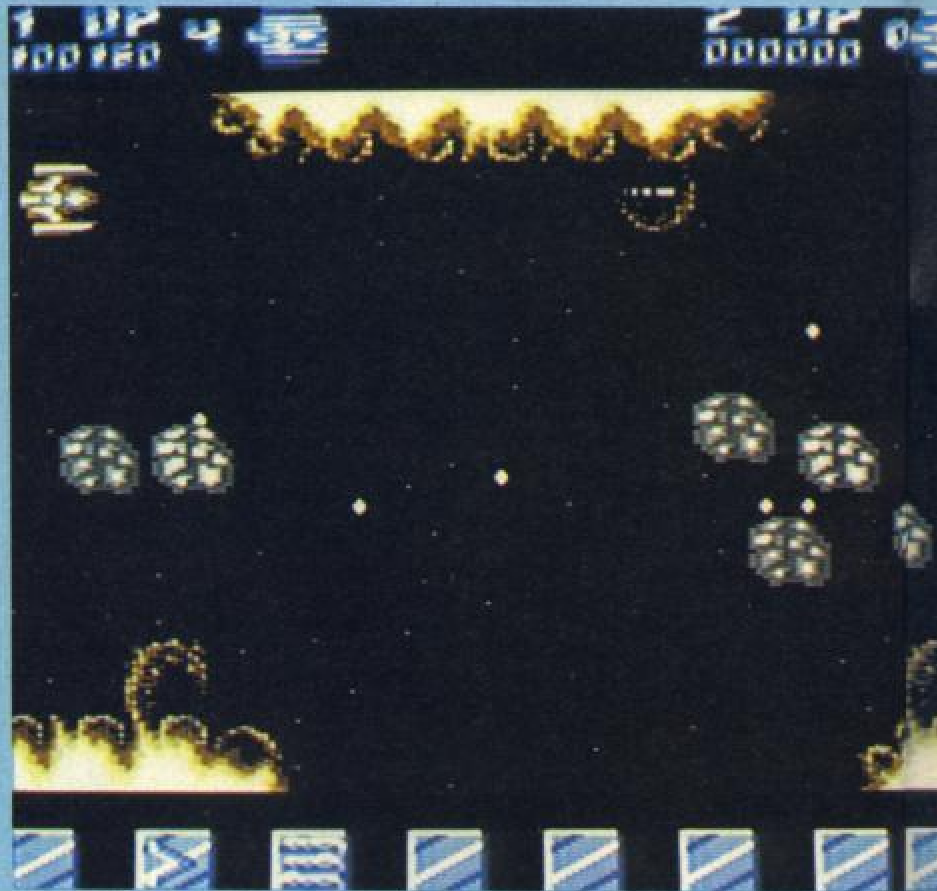
Delta is a very smart-looking game. The graphics are really neat, with a great parallax starfield and some lovely aliens. The music is superb, especially the main track that runs throughout the game. The gameplay, however, is a little on the weak side – learning the attack formations is essential but more often than not monotonous. Delta offers sufficient blasting for your money, but may lose its appeal quite quickly due to the predictable gameplay.

Dropped off within range of Delta, your objective is to progress as far as possible through the region and erradicate the Hsiffite menace.

Following an initial onslaught of alien ships, individually named sections of the region are encountered. These include particular hazards, which appear at the top and bottom of the screen and correspond to the area's name – for example, in the 'Rocks of Death' section, suitably desolate rock formations scroll past. In all cases, contact with the landscape destroys your ship.

Learning and memorising the alien formations is necessary to ensure progress, and complete destruction of attack waves earns credits. These are used to accumulate additional equipment, increasing the ship's firepower, speed and shields.

Seven icons periodically make their way across the screen, some grey, some blue – depending on how many credits you have amassed. Colliding with a blue icon adds the item in question to your ship and the icon reverts to a grey colour – hitting a grey icon results in the loss of a life. The added



The spacecraft passes too close to the flames of the Sun of Dreams △ and glows a glorious shade of orange

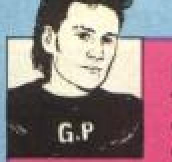
The Jelly Monster reigns supreme in the Jelly of Dreams . . . ▽



Dealing out large doses of death and destruction in Delta ▽







I like to dictate the action – I don't like the computer doing it for me. Which is why I find Delta very frustrating and quite boring. There is a distinct pattern to follow throughout the levels, which soon proves tedious, and you have to collect certain weapons at the right time, otherwise progress is impossible – regardless of how skillful you are. If bi-directional or multi-directional scrolling had been incorporated it might have been a different story, but simply flying in a straight line, encountering a set pattern of opposition is not very appealing. Also – if the ship had a limited supply of ammunition, instead of the existing time limit, there would have been more skill involved as the player would have to be shot conscious. Delta is highly polished and mildly playable, but on the whole I enjoyed the mini mixing-desk loader more than the game itself.

equipment has a limited useful life, so further additions are necessary as you progress.

Battle your way through thirty-two levels, and Delta is once more safe from the alien threat. But the Hsiffites don't give up that easy, and return a decade later. Once again it's up to you, now an older and more experienced pilot, to deal with the alien attack force. You're not the only one to have gained experience though – the enemy have also had time to improve their fighting skills and are now a more formidable opponent . . .

PRESENTATION 97%
Innovative loading system and slick in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 92%
Very effective parallax starfield, pretty sprites and landscapes, and varied alien movement patterns.

SOUND 97%
Excellent Rob Hubbard soundtrack and some good spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Easy to get into, but predictable after only a few plays.

LASTABILITY 63%
32 levels and roughly 200 attack patterns, but very little real variety.

VALUE 72%
There are cheaper shoot 'em ups, but few as polished.

OVERALL 74%
A high quality production which lacks substance.

HYPERBOWL

Mastertronic, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

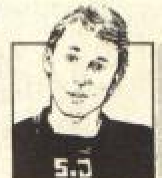
Dateline: the 37th Century. The sport: *Hyperbowl* – a two player competition combining all the speed and skill of ice-hockey with the high technology of the future.

Two identical ships face-off across the middle of a large playing area at the start of each contest. The aim is to propel a puck to your opponents goal-line, by repeated fire from the ship's cannon or direct collision with the puck itself. A choice of ten ships is given before play begins – each has its own characteristics of movement and weaponry.

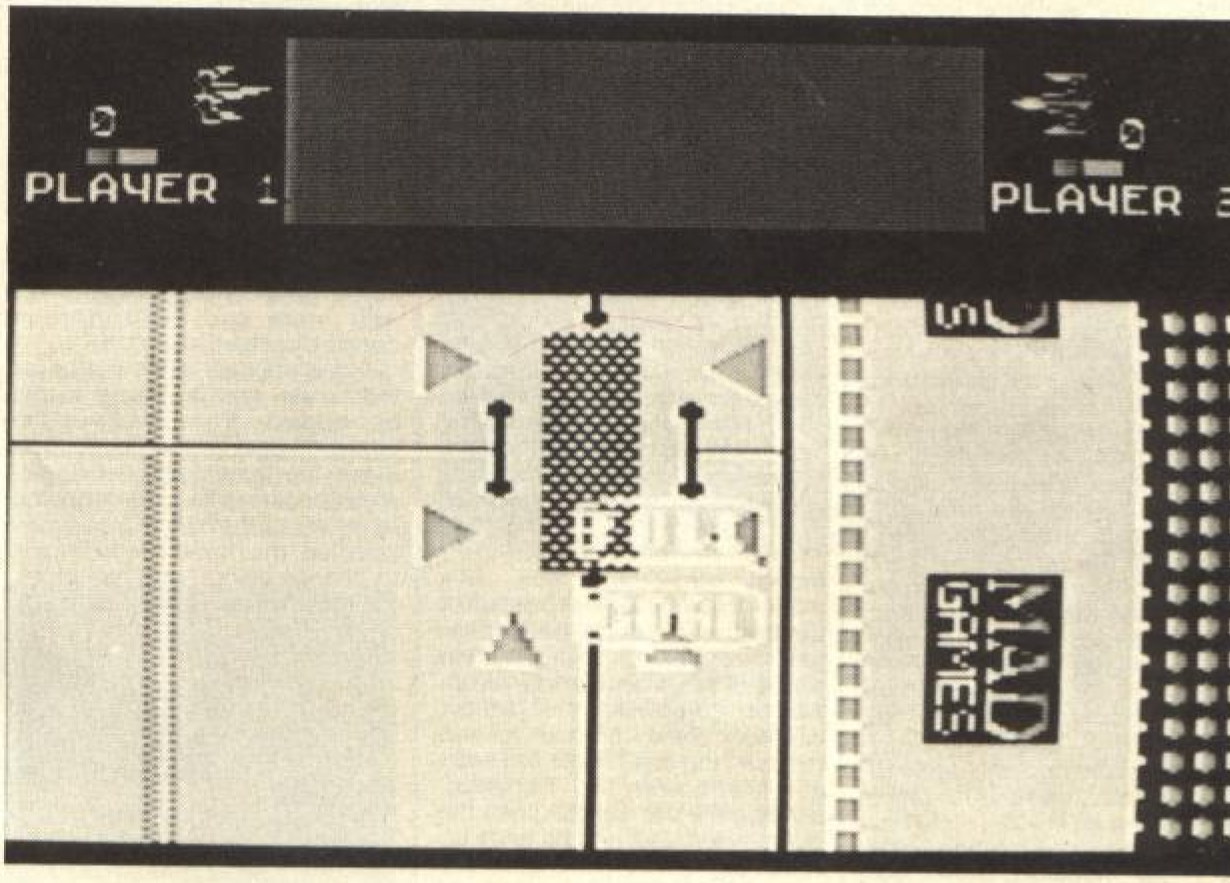
The playing field is multi-directional, and scrolls in a manner designed to keep the puck at the centre of the screen – this means that your ship is not necessarily visible at all times. To compensate, there is a scanner at the top of the screen which shows the position of the two combatants in relation to the puck. Situated either side of the scanner are representations of both ships showing the direction in which they are facing. Using this information in conjunction with the scanner, the ships are steered to the visible section of the playing field.

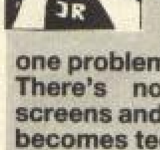
A point is scored when the puck crosses the goal-line, and two points are awarded if the puck enters the goal area situated in the centre of the goal-line.

Either one or two players can participate – the computer taking control of the second ship if the former option is chosen.



Following a rather awful loading screen, Hyperbowl presents some pretty decent graphics. The playing field and ships are neatly rendered, and movement on screen is smooth and convincing. Unfortunately, the gameplay is very simple and my interest waned after only a few goes. The two-player mode may appeal, but overall Hyperbowl remains a good implementation of a fairly tame idea.





This is a fairly simple computer implementation of the Crossfire board game with one problem – it doesn't work! There's no variety in the screens and the action quickly becomes tedious and predictable. The graphics and sound are nothing special, and it's only the two-player option that saves it from being chucked into the bin. Still, it is only three quid . . .



Hyperbowl in its simplest form is a computer version of the classic board game, Crossfire. Unfortunately, the visible pitch area is so small that it's easy to lose your bearings. As a one player game it can become very tedious, as initially it's difficult to get to grips with the controls – but you can soon get the hang of it. As a two player game Hyperbowl proves marginally more enjoyable – and it's only three quid.

PRESENTATION 81%
A one or two player option, three skill levels, and effective on-screen presentation.

GRAPHICS 69%
Simple, but effective.

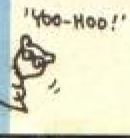
SOUND 55%
Bland title tune and adequate spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 63%
Mildly interesting at first, but this quickly fades.

LASTABILITY 41%
The lack of variety is not helped by the tediously simplistic gameplay.

VALUE 63%
Cheap enough to tempt.

OVERALL 54%
An interesting concept that's well executed . . . and still doesn't hit the mark.



INDOOR SPORTS

Advance, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only.

Bored? Don't feel like venturing outside? Fear not, Advance bring you three indoor sports to beat those rainy day blues – giving you a choice of Ten-Pin Bowling, Darts or that old fairground favourite, Air Hockey.

Game choice and the number of players to compete are selected from a main options screen. On loading the required section, you are presented with another list of options, from which many aspects of the relevant game can be altered according to choice.



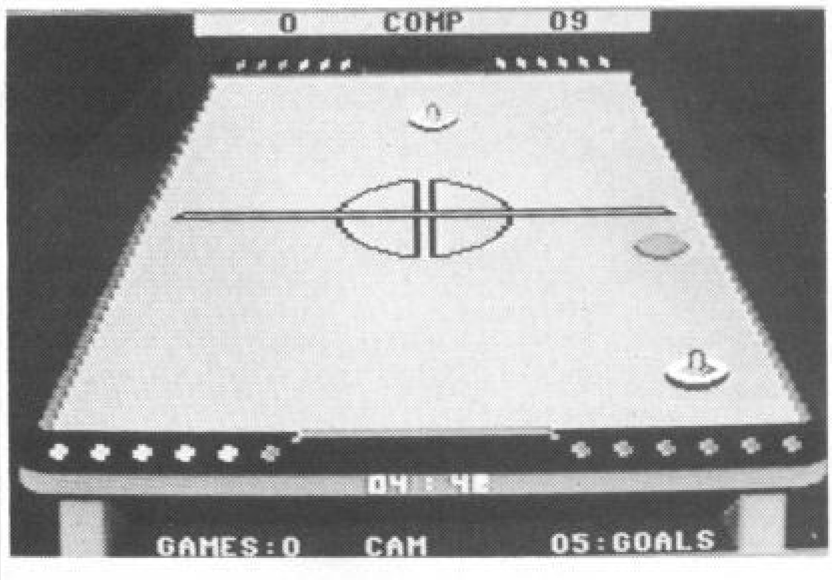
If Advance think they're ready to take on Epyx with this sports simulation, they're going to have to produce better products than Indoor Sports. **The introductory menu is needlessly complicated and only provides initial confusion to lead into more of the same in the three games that follow. I prefer Mastertronic's budget darts game to this awkward method of arrow throwing. When all the correct settings enabling you to throw a 60 have been discovered all that needs to be done each time is to make sure the settings are the same. Then there are the joys of ten-pin bowling – like the darts, this is badly implemented and confusing to play. Finally, there's the more promising Air Hockey which is in truth not a bad game – it's fast, uncomplicated and initially addictive, but after a few games it all tends to wear off.**



The standard of the three games which comprise this package varies greatly. The air hockey looks smart and provides a decent two-player challenge. The action gets very tense and things move about smoothly and realistically. Ten-pin bowling is less enjoyable, having an awkward control method and not giving true pin-falls (you can hit the four pin and get a strike – barely possible in reality). The timing required for the final release of the ball is too precise and on many occasions it ends up in the gutter, while your bowler leaps about clutching his leg. The darts section is really dire – it's far too slow and unnecessarily complex, taking ages to actually finish a game. It's a shame that this is only as good as its weakest link, as you could have had a lot of game for your nine quid.

In Ten-Pin Bowling, you begin with a side profile of your bowler at the start of the lane. Moving the joystick positions the bowler, and holding the fire button down highlights an arrow which continuously moves across the lane. This marker determines the direction of the ball: on releasing the fire button, the marker stops moving and the bowler then begins his walk up. As he completes this action, another press of the button releases the ball. Shoot too soon and the bowler hits his ankle, sending the ball trundling into the gutter – too late, and he ends up sprawling on the lane, while the ball takes the gutter route once again.

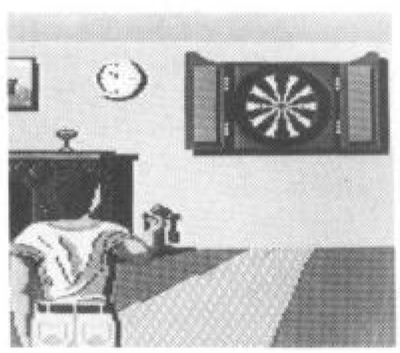
As the ball heads for the pins, the screen changes to a first-person view of the lane, showing the consequent pin-fall. The score is then displayed above the alley, next to a picture of the bowler's face as he displays an expression suitable to the outcome.



Both players have two attempts to clear the pins, over ten frames, and the scoreboard is updated in the correct manner, with strikes and spares recorded in the usual fashion.

The Darts simulation is slightly more complex, as all aspects of the arrow's flight are covered. The screen shows a central dartboard, with score and other relevant details displayed around this.

A dart appears at the bottom of the screen and is moved to the appropriate position below the board. Pressing the fire button stops the cursor and an angle-meter begins to fill, corresponding to the arc of the flight. Once this is selected, the power-meter begins to change colour, and as before, the required power is selected by a click of the fire button.

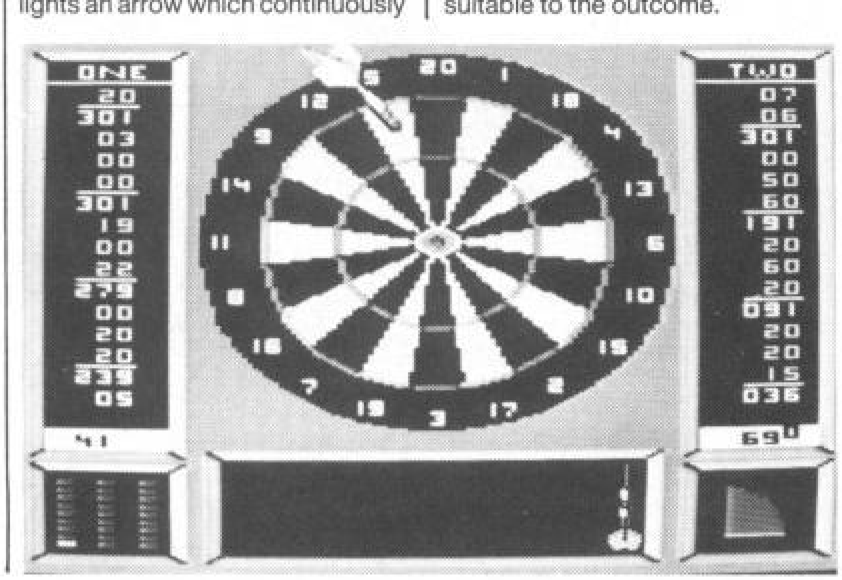


The view switches to an over-the-shoulder viewpoint of your player as he throws, set in a suitable pub surrounding. The screen then reverts to a close-up of the board, showing the dart's final position and the updated score. This is repeated twice more and then the next player takes his turn.

Finally, you are treated to a blast from the past with a two-player simulation of air hockey, a table-top version of that all-action ice sport.

A forced perspective end view of the table is given showing the puck and the two joystick-controlled 'hitters'. The aim is to get the puck into your opponent's goal as many times as possible within the time limit. The puck moves rapidly around the table in perspective and the speed of the hitters may be speeded up by holding down the fire button.

Any goals scored are displayed by a row of lights along the end of the table corresponding to the player.





Advance have tried quite hard to emulate three indoor sports, but they've failed miserably with the darts and bowling. The problem with the darts module is that it's incredibly difficult to throw the arrows. Having to gauge the power and trajectory is silly – it only serves to make a simple game complicated. The bowling module fails along those lines too – controlling the man is really tricky, and there's no feeling of realism. The only good module is the air hockey, but even that has limited appeal. If you're after a sports simulation, look up the Epyx series – they're streets ahead in every department.

PRESENTATION 87%
Plenty of options and good instrcutions.

GRAPHICS 73%
Fair on air hockey and darts, naff on ten-pin bowling.

SOUND 61%
Awful jingles, but adequate effects.

HOOKABILITY 68%
Easy enough to get into, although the controls may take some getting used to.

LASTABILITY 46%
Only the air hockey holds interest for any reasonable length of time.

VALUE 51%
Insufficient entertainment for the price.

OVERALL 58%
A commendable, but mediocre attempt to produce an alternative sports simulation package.

THAI BOXING

Anco, £7.95 cass, joystick only

Having been beaten senseless in the vast array of contact sports available on computer, you may now indulge in further oriental culture with *Thai Boxing*, a strange mixture of martial artistry and fisticuffs.

The playing screen depicts an elevated view of the combatants, who are situated before some suitably Eastern backdrops, presented in corresponding perspective.

At the start of each bout the box-



I'm sick and tired of beat 'em ups that don't offer anything new or exciting. Thai Boxing **is the same old game with different backdrops. There are a couple of novelties included, like the way the faces gradually become bloody and so on. However, unless you've got a bizarre desire to collect every bash 'em up in existence, give** Thai Boxing **a miss.**



As the latest in a now all-too-long line of fighting games, Thai Boxing **offers no startling advance over any of the others available. To be fair, it is competent, if perhaps a little lacking in variety of movement. The graphics are adequate – the backgrounds being pleasant but a little sparse. Not bad, but I think it has missed the boat somewhat, especially at its current asking price.**

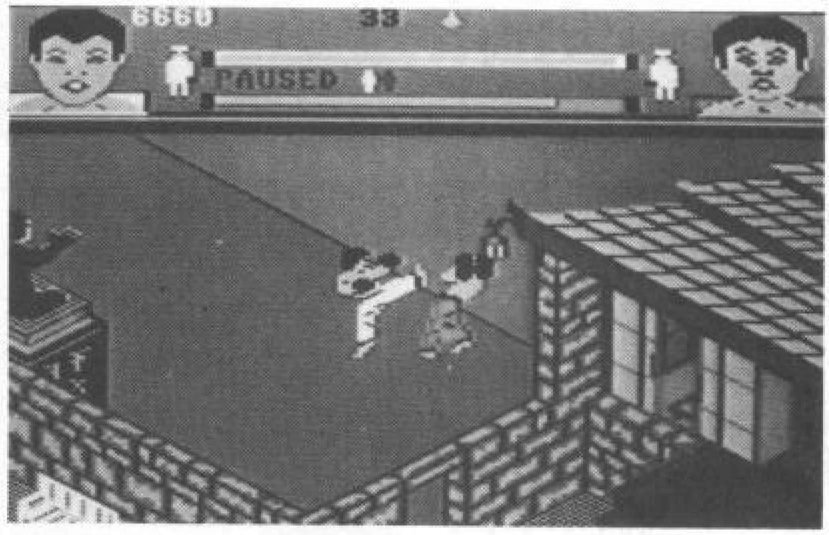
ers are seen squatting on the floor – the first round then begins, and they literally leap into action. Each bout consists of three rounds, and at the end of a round the boxers somersault into new positions ready for the next fight.

The progress of the contest is measured by loss of stamina, as indicated by a pulsing bar at the top of the screen. Next to this are the boxer's faces. As the bout continues and the action hots up, the faces begin to show the damage inflicted upon one another. Thus, by the end of the round they are covered in cuts and blood – which is promptly wiped off by two little men in white coats!

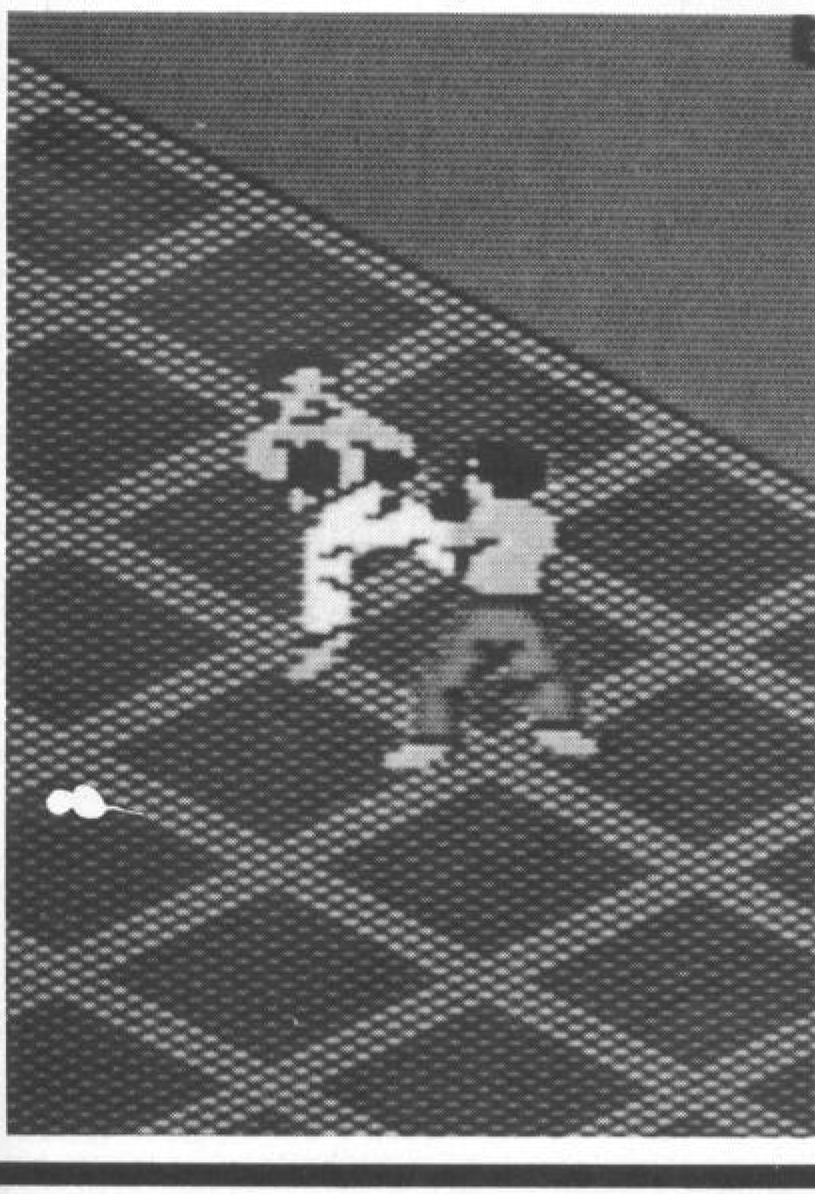
Having completed one bout, you progress to the next level. There are six levels in all, each with a different backdrop and becoming progressively harder.

Control is executed in the usual way: each position of the joystick corresponding to a different move of the combatant. These are accompanied by suitable sound effects (mainly consisting of crunching body noises), and there is some speech on completion of a contest.

The options screen is joystick controlled, and caters for one and two player modes. It also shows the current state of play at the end of each bout. A high-score table is also provided which may be saved to tape or disk.









Anco have tried something new with this fighting game – changing the angle of view and including the bloody face meter. But they fail to cover up the fact that it's just another addition to the already swollen beat 'em up market. The other detraction is that the opponents are too easy to beat, and consequently the fun disappears after a couple of goes. If you haven't already got a fighting game then you might like to look this up, but if you have, turn your attention to something more original.

PRESENTATION 81%
Informative instructions and on-screen display.

GRAPHICS 69%
Good backdrops and adequate sprites.

SOUND 56%
Bland tune and harsh spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 62%
Initially appealing but not particularly gripping.

LASTABILITY 53%
Not much in the way of lasting challenge, although the two player option does provide some spice.

VALUE 55%
Not the cheapest fighting game available, and certainly not the best.

OVERALL 55%
A different approach to a tried and tested theme, sadly making little difference to the content.

EXPLORER

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

Gargantuan is an over-used adjective, but a game with 40 billion mappable locations seems to qualify for this description – so using it one more time to describe *Explorer* won't do any harm. The Ram Jam Corporation has ever been a source of oddities, from its first and marvellously humorous *Valkyrie 17* adventure. In this new quest, the cosmic joke is that your second-hand space vehicle has broken up over the Emerald planet. To make matters worse, fragments of your craft have scattered around nine of its 40 billion locations – and you've got to find them all before escape is possible . . . some cosmic joke, huh?

Several vital instruments have survived the crash. There's a Compass, a Homing Beacon, Direction Finder, a Laser Pulse Gun and an all-important Sonar. Recovering the ship parts is a problem, but at least the sonar makes life sound brighter – by bouncing an echo off an object, its bearing and rough distance is revealed. A short walk through the jungle is okay, but you're told if the range is too far for a stroll and it's then time to take to the trusty jet-pack.



How does the idea of attempting to explore forty billion locations grab you? No, me neither. Explorer **is basically a programming exercise designed to impress rather than stimulate – but it does neither. The graphics, though reasonably well executed, are lacking in any sort of variety – there could be ten locations for all we know. It more or less consists of triangulating compass bearings to find the parts of your spaceship. A heavily sarcastic 'wow'. Maybe this system of creating locations can be put to better use in another game – it's completely wasted in this one.**

When within range of an object, travelling can be done on foot. Pressing the forward key brings the front view into sharp relief and shows the next planet section. Left and right movements (or even a full 180 degree turn) are shown as a bearing at the top of the screen.

The Emerald Planet is largely uninhabited, except for a strange breed of energy-sapping robotic bugs. Energy loss can be fatal, and although there *is* a means of replenishing it, killing the robots is a far better method of staying alive. A Laser Pulse Gun is a handy extra when it comes to bugs – it's accessed through Weapons Mode.

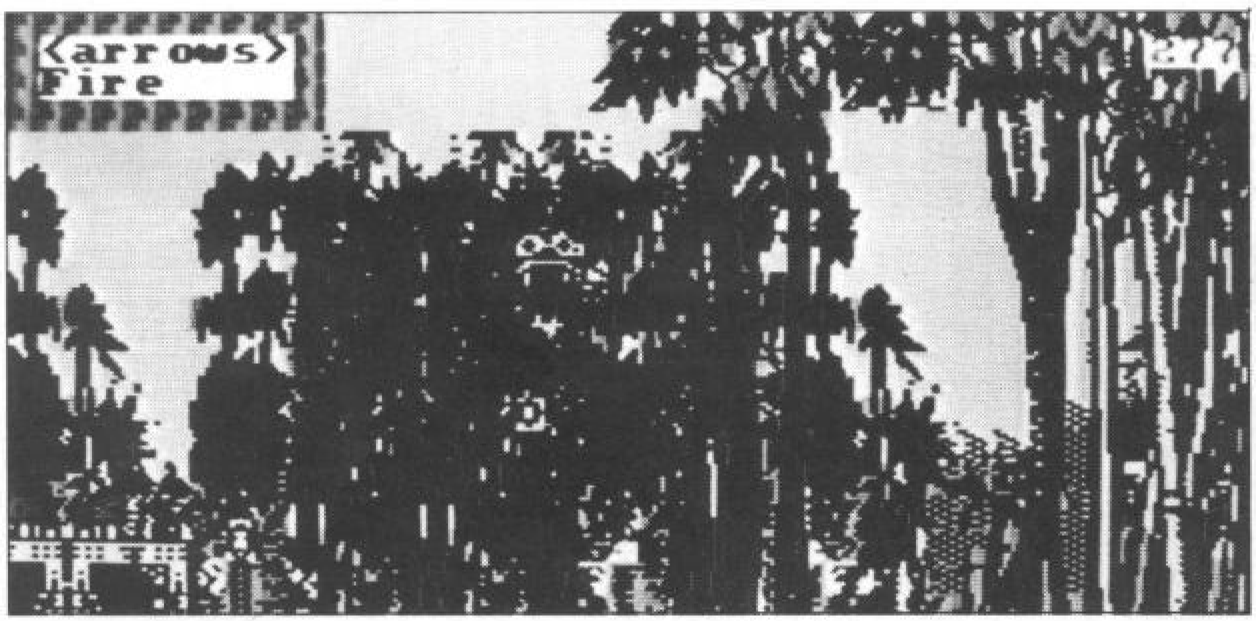
Swirling patches of colour are encountered deeper in the jungle. These act as doorways to locations elsewhere on the planet. Remember there are 40 billion, so almost any name will do for a destination. Mind you, you can get lost too, so this is where the homing beacons come in. These can be dropped anywhere to be used as useful reference points – they're seen from the air as flashing squares.

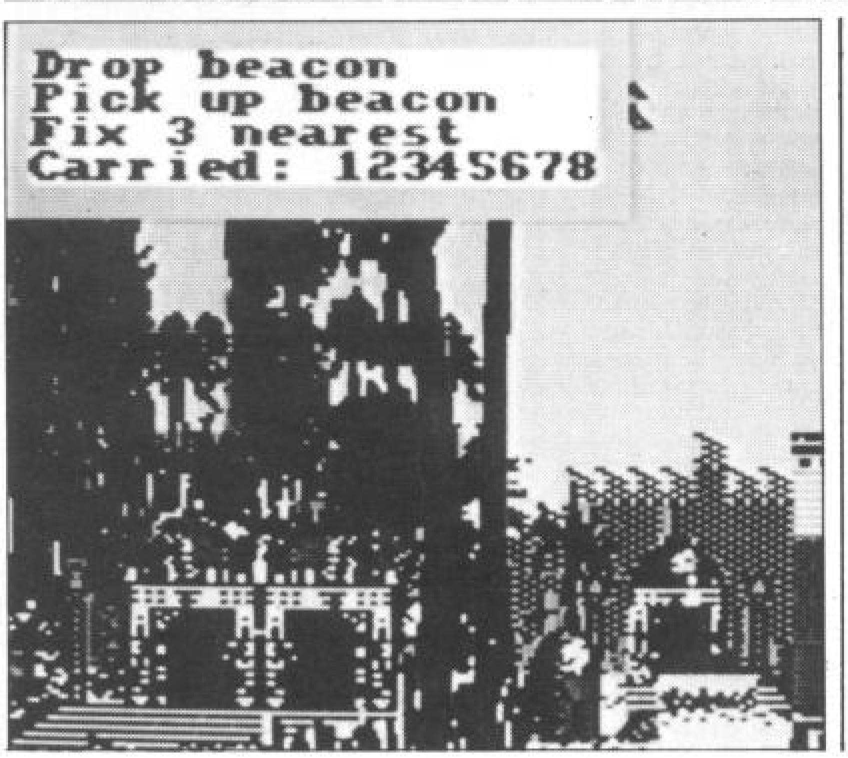




In order to be able to call this computer entertainment, the term would have to be redefined. Locating the nine inconsequential objects within the 40 billion virtually identical screens is unbelievably tedious, monotonous, pointless, fruitless and rubbish. The game-play is completely unrewarding, there's no action, and all of the locations that I've seen look exactly the same. If you really want to do some exploring why not buy a rail or bus ticket? There's a whole world outside your computer that has an infinite number of locations, the scenery is portrayed in highly convincing 3D and it moves in a lovely parallax scrolling fashion.

The energy available to power all the equipment is limited, and the level of reserves is shown as one of the menu options, which can be accessed at any time by pressing FIRE and then the first letter of the required option.







This is a computer simulation of searching for a needle in a haystack. It's absolutely mind-numbingly tedious – literally spending hours flying over what appears to be the same landscape, achieving absolutely nothing. And when you do finally get within range of your target, it takes hours to pinpoint its exact position . . . AAARGH! I would also dispute the manufacturers claim that the planet consists of 40 billion locations – it appears to me to be 40 boring locations repeated a billion times. Don't buy this under any circumstances, unless of course your idea of a good time is taking up the carpet and watching the floorboards warp.

PRESENTATION 42%
Confusing, awkward, and frustratingly slow.

GRAPHICS 64%
Attractive, but repetitive.

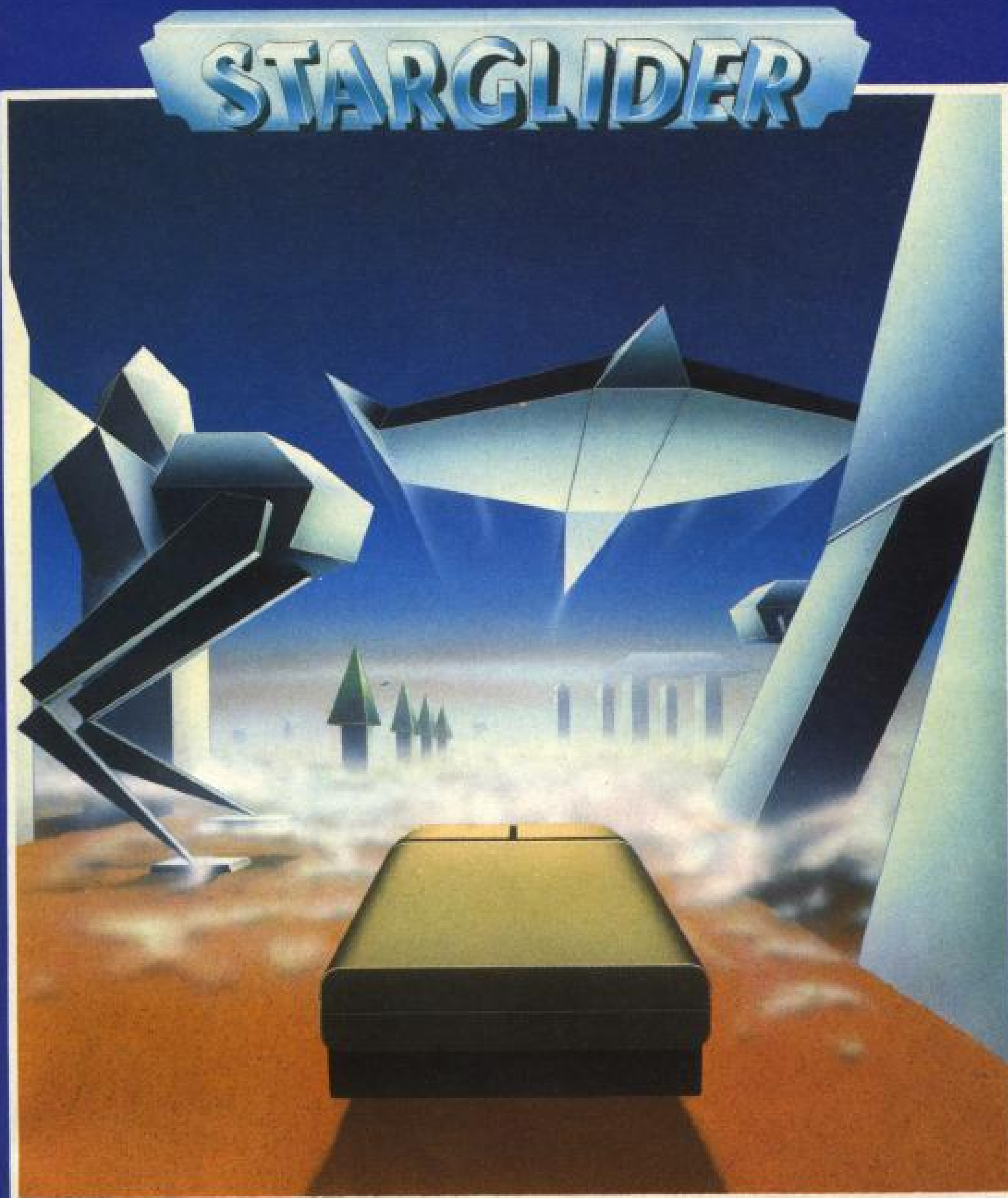
SOUND 10%
Very little, and what's there is poor.

HOOKABILITY 27%
Irritating and far from addictive.

LASTABILITY 7%
Absolutely nothing stimulating or worthwhile to return to.

VALUE 6%
Represents an abysmal investment for ten pounds.

OVERALL 13%
In this case, big isn't remotely beautiful – not one single redeeming feature to write home about.



PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

Popular Computing Weekly

Most Innovative Game of the Year

Your Computer

'The games designers were aiming at the "best arcade shoot 'em up with vector graphics"... they have achieved this'

Commodore User Screen Star

'Has set a new standard in its class'

Commodore Computing International
Mega Rating



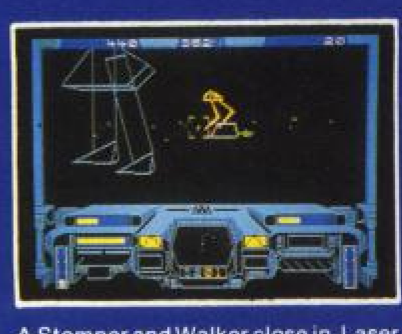
SENT TO CONQUER - MACHINE VERSUS MAN

Air to air and air to ground combat flight simulation

Defeat the elusive Starglider in an amazing all-action combat flight simulation. The planet Novenia has been devastated by an evil tide of invading Egrons; single-handed, you must wipe out the enemy in explosive one-to-one combat. Swooping down with lasers blazing, you'll need to take fast evasive action to avoid the barrage of enemy missiles. Exhilarating low-level attack and defence flight manoeuvres, coupled with a cunning strategic element, make STARGLIDER a classic among classics.



Energy towers lie dead ahead defended by heavily armed Egron battle tanks



A Stomper and Walker close in. Laser fire is futile against these metal monsters



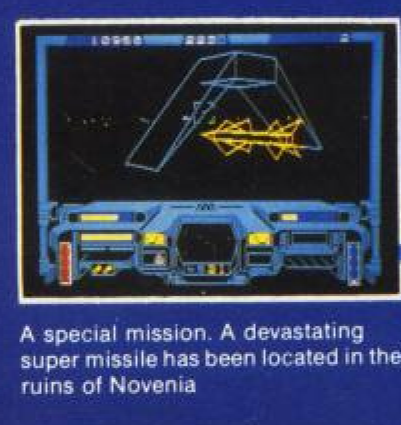
The Walker attacks. Bank your craft to evade the lasers and prepare to fire



Missile launched! Steer your TV-guided missile on target to annihilate the invader



The Starglider swoops in to attack. Several direct hits are needed to destroy it



A special mission. A devastating super missile has been located in the ruins of Novenia

Screenshots taken from Spectrum 48/128 version

CBM 64/128 cassette **£14.95**

CBM 64/128 disc **£17.95**

RAINBIRD

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Star Raid

The Great Galactic Advert

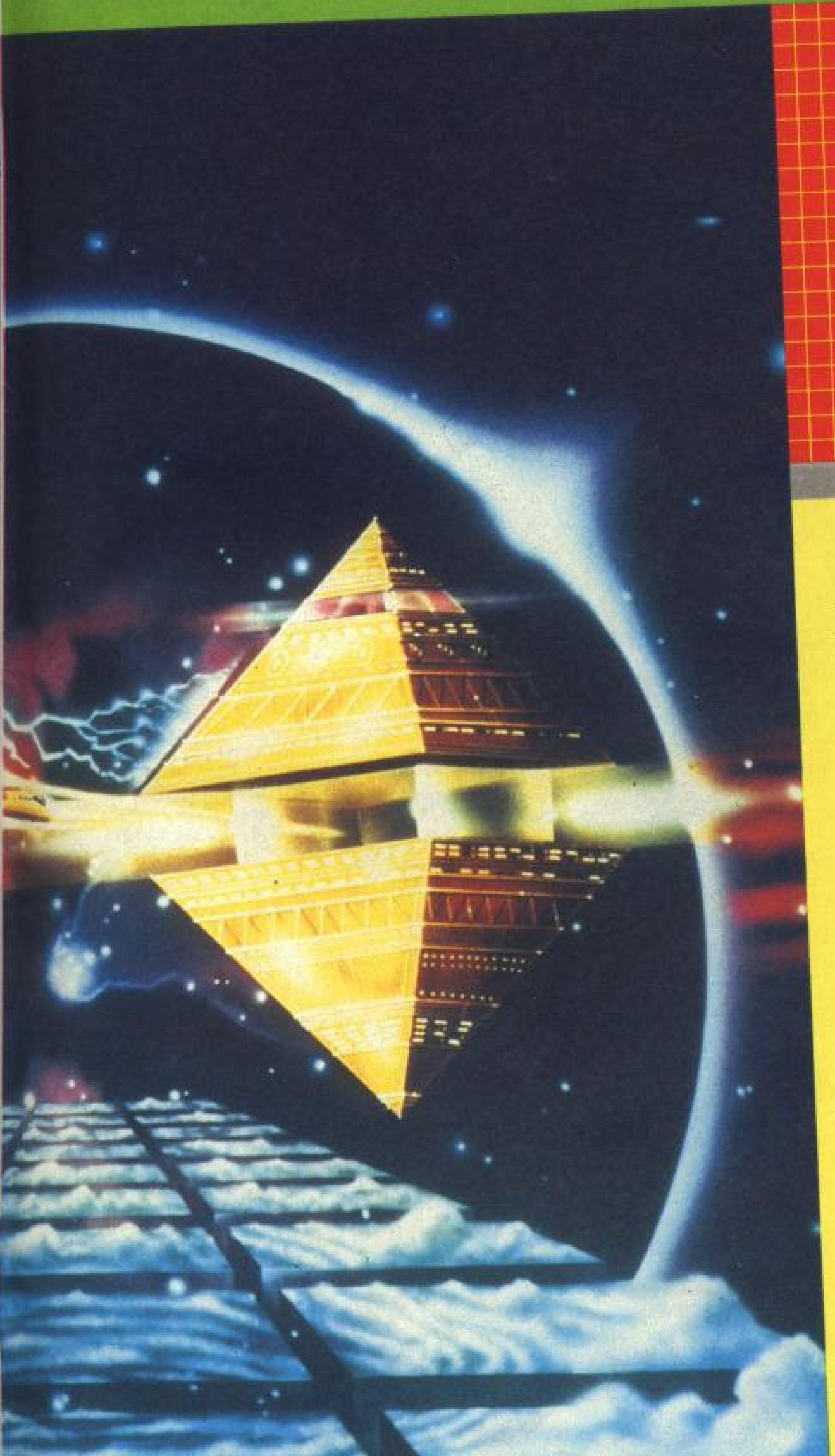


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ZZAP! READERS' CH

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(13%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

2 *(2)* **LEADER BOARD** *(13%)*
US Gold/Access, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

3 *(5)* **GREEN BERET** *(6%)*
Imagine, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

4 *(4)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(6%)*
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

5 *(3)* **SUPER CYCLE** *(5%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

6 *(6)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE** *(3%)*
System 3, £6.50 cass, £10.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

7 *(9)* **URIDIUM** *(3%)*
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

8 *(12)* **GAUNTLET** *(2%)*
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

9 *(8)* **SANXION** *(2%)*
Thalamus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

10 *(10)* **PARALLAX** *(2%)*
Ocean, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

11 *(7)* **ALLEYKAT**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

12 *(11)* **DAN DARE**
Virgin, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

13 *(13)* **THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD**
Palace Software, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

14 *(15)* **DRUID**
Firebird, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 88%

15 *(14)* **PARADROID**
Hewson, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

16 *(18)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: N/A

17 *(20)* **WINTER GAMES**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

18 *(16)* **1942**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 58%

19 *(19)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

20 *(24)* **INFILTRATOR**
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

21 *(25)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

22 *(28)* **ELITE**
Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

23 *(17)* **KNIGHT GAMES**
English Software, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%

24 *(29)* **FLASH GORDON**
Mastertronic, £2.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

25 *(23)* **FIST II**
Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 39%

26 *(30)* **SPACE HARRIER**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 45%

27 *(-)* **ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE**
Software Projects, 9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%

28 *(21)* **IRIDIS ALPHA**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

29 *(26)* **AVENGER**
Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 86%

30 *(22)* **THRUST**
Firebird, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%



HARTS

APRIL 1987

MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **SANXION**
Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 *(5)* **MIAMI VICE**
Ocean
'Title Screen' Music (Martin Galway)

3 *(-)* **LIGHTFORCE**
FTL
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

4 *(2)* **KNUCKLEBUSTERS**
Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

5 *(-)* **FLASH GORDON**
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

6 *(3)* **PARALLAX**
Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

7 *(-)* **GREEN BERET**
Imagine
Loading Music (Martin Galway)

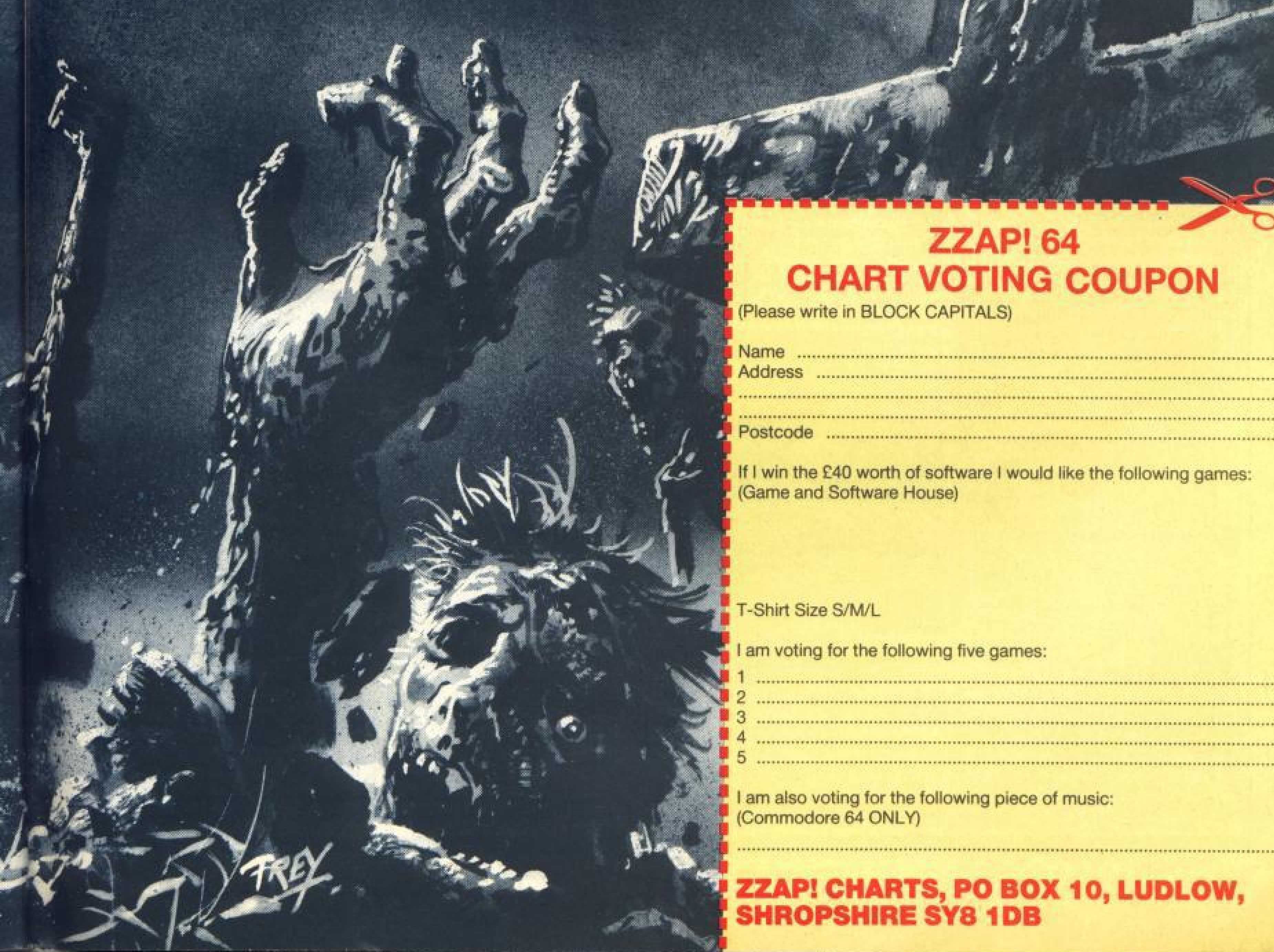
8 *(7)* **RAMBO**
Ocean
Main Theme (Martin Galway)

9 *(4)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

10 *(10)* **PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID**
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **Mark Young**, Swindon SN4 0HA
RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Kevin Scott**, Edinburgh EH8 7AY; **Gordon Saunders**, Torquay TQ2 7RE; **Jimmy Layland**, Birmingham B26 3ER; **Charles Stewart**, Lancs BB4 8RP



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1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

I am also voting for the following piece of music:
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....

ZZAP! CHARTS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

ZZAP! TEST

FIFTH AXIS

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

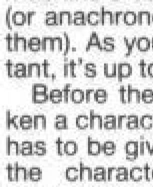
When Professor Chronos created a time machine, little did he realise what chaos his discovery would cause. Accompanied by his assistant, the Professor and his assistant travelled the timeways and all went well . . . until the machine malfunctioned and exploded, scattering its component parts throughout the centuries. This event ripped apart the very fabric of the Universe, and in the confusion a new Universe began to emerge,



'Don't judge a book by its cover' says the proverb, and in this case it's quite true. First impressions of Fifth Axis **aren't very good – it even looks grotty on paper. However, when you grab hold of a joystick and start playing you realise that it's absolutely brilliant. A fair bit of beat 'em up action spliced with a hefty dose of arcade adventure, all mixed in with some great tunes and effects, results in an extremely playable and enjoyable game. Joystick accuracy and speedy reactions are required, and there's enough action and challenge to keep any player happy for quite some time.**

destroying the existing cosmos as it developed. The only way that this process can be arrested is if someone collects all of the time machine's scattered components (or anachronons as the Prof calls them). As you're the Prof's assistant, it's up to you to do the job.

Before the mission is undertaken a character is set up. Firstly it has to be given a name and then the character's three different characteristics – force, agility and



Fifth Axis **is visually awful – the backgrounds are very bland, with poor use of colour and very little detail. Similarly, the sprites are only single colour, but they do work unusually well. The main character is moved around quite easily, and the animation is relatively smooth, with some nice parallax scrolling on the background in the second stage. But basically this is a sort of poor man's** Impossible Mission **– a bit overpriced, but quite enjoyable.**



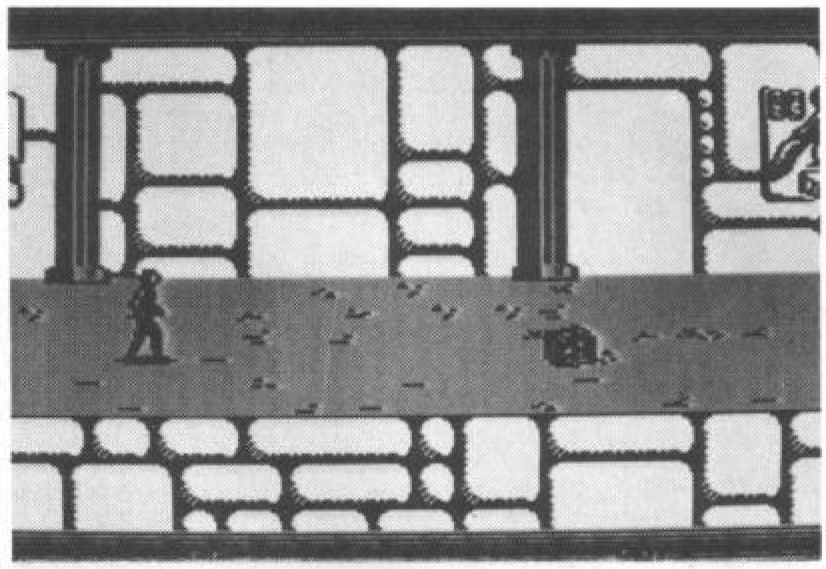
Fifth Axis **initially appears uninteresting – there's not a great deal to look at, and the inlay doesn't make it sound promising. However, when you begin playing it soon holds your interest. Basically, it's a very simple game, with oddments such as the collection of objects and killing aliens thrown in to add a bit of spice. The animation is particularly striking – the way in which the main character runs is quite realistic.** Fifth Axis **is a great package – well worth spending some time and money on.**

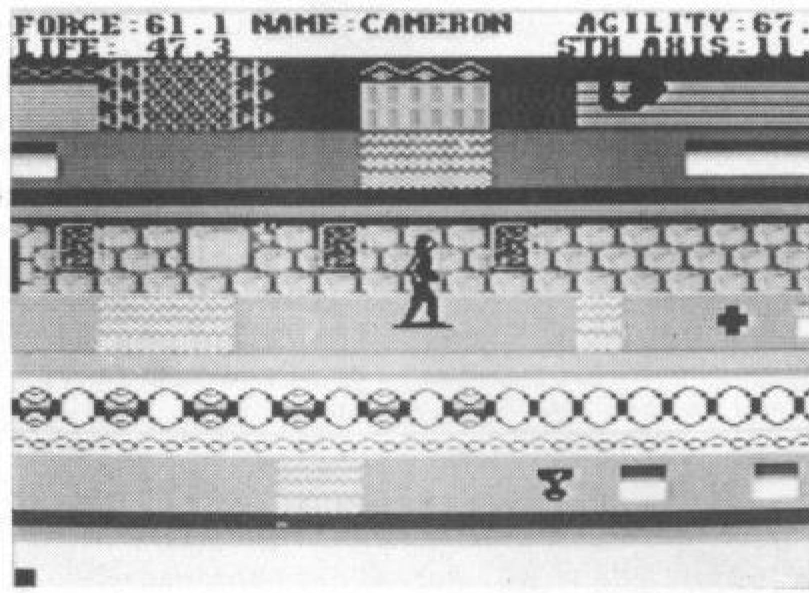
life – are defined. Each characteristic has an initial value of fifty points and another fifty points are available, allowing the player to distribute them according to playing style. The mission begins when the points have been allocated.

The lab consists of a series of scrolling horizontal levels, linked by lifts and gravity drops. Misplaced artifacts are scattered throughout the complex, and can be picked up by running over them. Geometrically shaped keys can also be picked up – endowing the character with the ability to cross holes in the floor that can't normally be jumped.

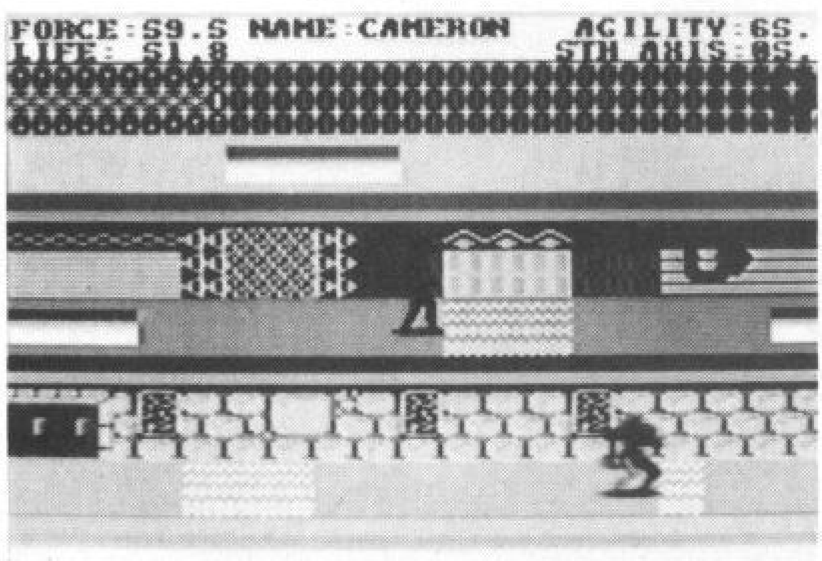
Throughout the mission the hero is harassed by the lab's guardian androids. These horrors attack on sight, and contact with them reduces the character's numerically represented energy level towards a fatal zero. The hero has the ability to fight back, and can totally destroy an android by repeated kicking and punching.

Every time an object is collected or an android is destroyed, the numerical 'Fifth Axis' rating at the





top of the screen increases by a few points. Each time it reaches a multiple of ten the character is sent to the location of an anachronon for a limited period of time. The screen displays a scrolling passageway along which the character runs. An anachronon is situated at the end, and has to be reached before the time limit expires. The passageway is littered with objects which have to be jumped or ducked, making the run more difficult. Hitting one results in your character stumbling over, and a loss of time is incurred. Recovering the anachronon returns the character to the lab so that more artifacts can be picked up. Failure causes the 'Fifth Axis' meter to diminish, and consequently more artifacts have to be picked up. The mission is complete when the meter reaches 100%.



PRESENTATION 85%
Plenty of options and slick in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 68%
Garish, but there are some imaginative sprites and pretty effects.

SOUND 78%
Continuous soundtrack which varies throughout the mission.

HOOKABILITY 74%
Instantly enjoyable bashing and collecting action.

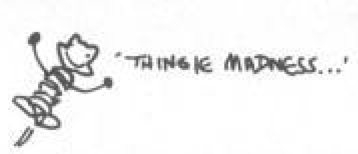
LASTABILITY 69%
Saving the universe is a tough, occasionally monotonous, but enjoyable enough task.

VALUE 59%
Not enough action and playability to warrant its high price tag.

OVERALL 70%
An interesting and fairly unusual game.



'NICE TO SEE OUR REVIEWERS WORKING SO WELL...'



MAGIC MADNESS

Anco, £7.95 cass, £9.95 disk, joystick or keys

Once upon a time in a country called Neverland, there ruled four magicians, each with a magic scroll from which he drew knowledge. Their power was good and everyone in Neverland was happy . . . until the evil sorcerer, Colo, killed the magicians and stole the scrolls, plunging the land into despair.

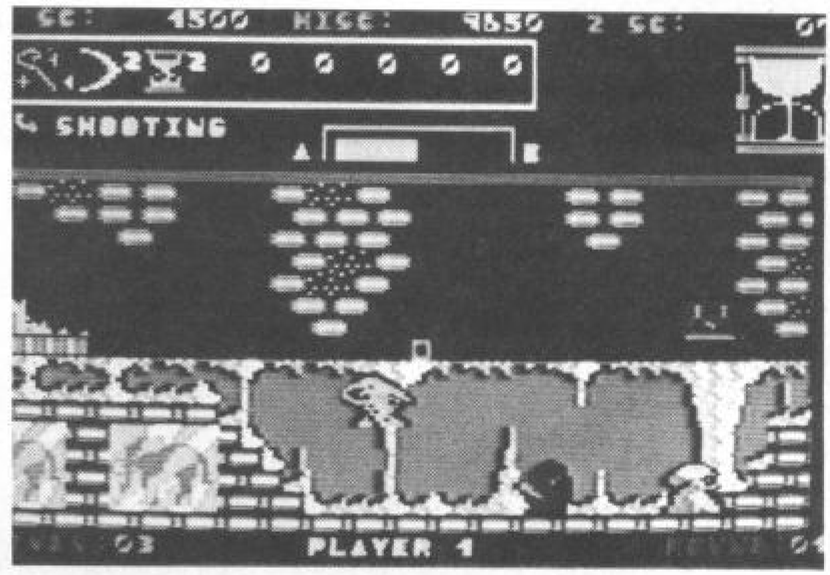
A good witch has been enlisted by the people of Neverland to enter Colo's burrow and attempt to recover the scrolls. She has four items to help protect herself – a Cape, a Cross, a Wand and an Hour Glass. Each of these has a different function, enabling the witch to deal with the creatures inhabiting Colo's domain.

The story unfolds over the four levels of the burrow: Heaven, Forest, Caverns and Ice, represented on screen as horizontally scrolling corridors.

You control the witch as she wanders around the burrow in search of the scrolls, despatching Colo's henchmen as you go. Chests are encountered along the way, and contain either bonus points, extra time, a balloon that enables the witch to float up to the previous level or magic weapons. These are carried by the witch and when a denizen approaches the appropriate weapon can be accessed by pressing the space bar



Magic Madness **isn't particularly outstanding – but it's not awful. It is, very simply, a reasonable platform game with a few nice graphics to 'pretty it up'. The music adds to the atmosphere, and creates the mood to get you deeper into your exploration. There's not a great deal I can add to that – personally I wouldn't pay the asking price, but I'm quite happy to sit down and play it for a while.**



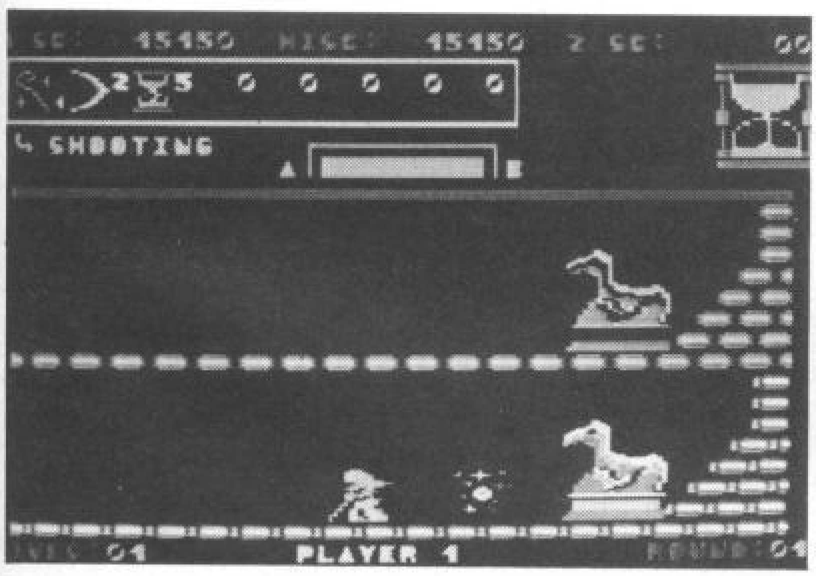


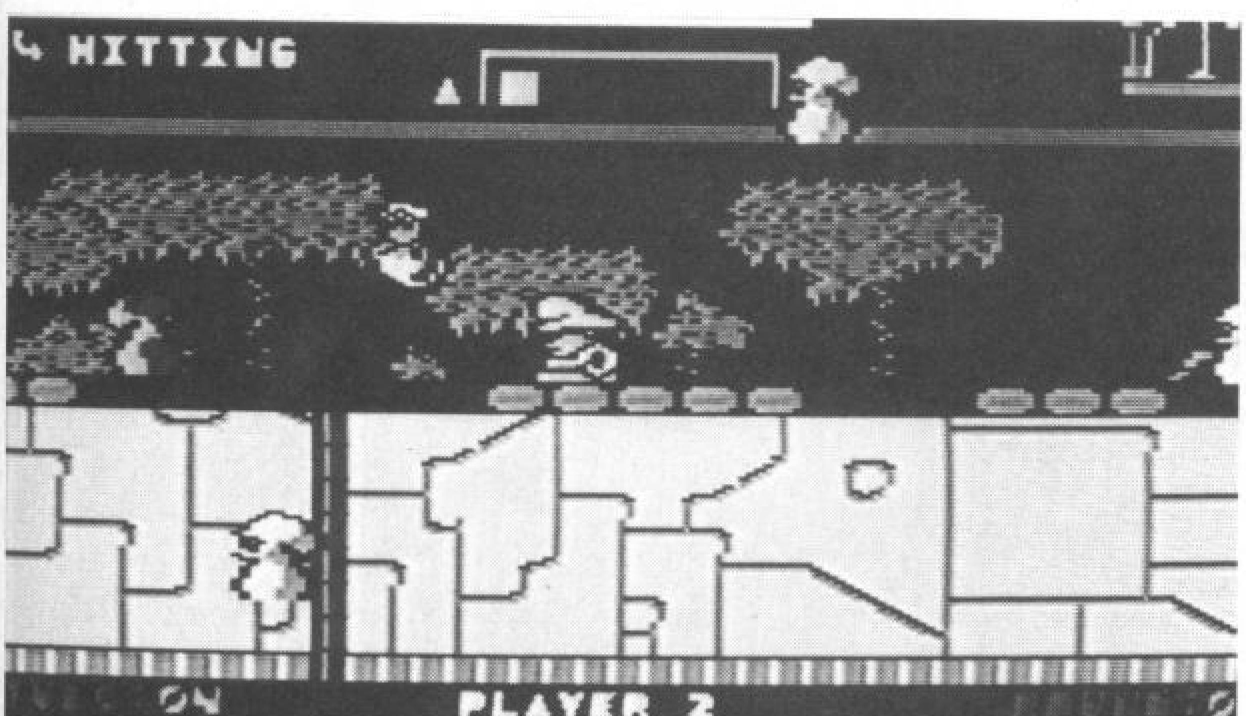
Magic Madness **is an oddly appealing little game. The graphics and sound are nothing special – the main character moves around rather slowly and some of the sprites are a little bland, but it's quite playable and fairly addictive. The action does get quite hectic at times, and although simple (and possibly overpriced for what it offers)** Magic Madness **may appeal to the arcade adventurer in need of some light entertainment.**

The four scrolls are hidden in the burrow, and the witch must find the guardian Ant Eater on each level in order to be presented with the scroll. Only when all four scrolls have been collected can the witch confront Colo himself; killing the sorcerer, and freeing Neverland from his grasp.



This is quite a strange game both to look at and to play, but it's really good fun. The odd graphics and control method initially confuse, but as more proficiency is gained the full entertaining and addictive qualities can be appreciated. The task quite a difficult, but Magic Madness **deserves perseverence. The highly original high-score table is great idea, adding to the program's 'cute' appeal. An unusual product which deserves a lot of credit – try it out.**





PRESENTATION 66%
Simple instructions, limited options, but a neat high-score table.

GRAPHICS 62%
Small, adequately drawn and animated characters, with colourful backdrops.

SOUND 69%
A good rendition of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' plays as you do.

HOOKABILITY 72%
Easy to play, and it's possible to get quite far from start.

LASTABILITY 51%
Complete one level and the urge to return isn't so strong.

VALUE 56%
A fair price for a reasonable game.

OVERALL 58%
A mildly playable game – destined for obscurity, perhaps?

ZZAP! TEST

TRANSFORMERS

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

Once again, the evil Decepticons are attacking Earth in search of energy. It's up to you to marshall a force of eight Autobots and fight off the despicable robots. Strategy is combined with arcade action – seven key installations provide targets for the invaders, and part of the gameplay involves making sure that at least one of your defensive robots is on hand when an attack is mounted on a particular location. Each of the eight Autobots you command has its own special blend of characteristics and attributes affecting its capabilities.

The overall picture is revealed on the main map screen, accessed at any stage by a press of the M key. All the locations are shown, together with the roadways that link them – the eight Autobots are

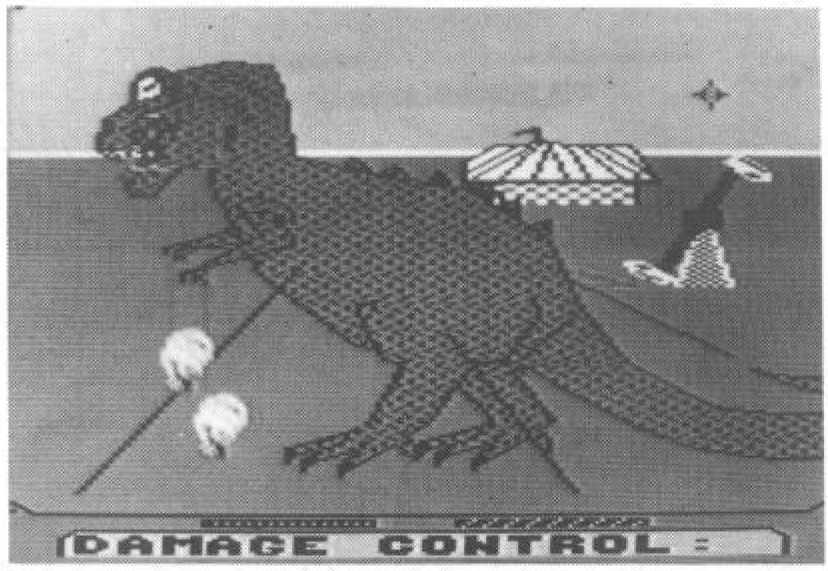


Everything about this program is rubbish. For a start, the plot is so awful that it wouldn't convince a three-year-old. Next come the graphics, and these are in the same league as the plot, as they would disappoint the same unfortunate child. Actually, they look as though they've been drawn by someone of that age. Obviously concepts such as perspective, shading, 3D and colour were all a little too much for the artist to cope with. The sound is an out-and-out joke, and it all gets boring after a couple of plays. How the programmers could pass this off as a professional product is beyond me entirely. Don't buy this – not even if you think the toys are the best thing since sliced bread.

represented by numbered squares. When a location is under Decepticon attack it flashes red on the main map – the border flashes red if an attack begins while the screen display is being generated by the visual unit of a Autobot currently under your direct control.

To move Autobots around the terrain, press D when the map screen is in view, followed by the number of the robot you wish to move. Enter the initial letter of the destination location, and the selected robot begins the journey and you are free to get on with other things. All the Autobots may be sent to a single location, or the team may be allocated to locations according to preset deployment patterns.

The V key allows you to take direct control of a specified robot, in which case the map screen is



replaced by the view-screen generated by that robot's visual circuits. A cross-hair sight is used to target the on-board weapon system and if the nasty Decepticons are active at the location, a shoot 'em up sequence commences. More than one Autobot may be at a single location, and the B key invokes the autofire mode – up to eight 'targets' can be placed on the screen by moving the sight and pressing fire. After a short delay the cannon shoots automatically until all the targets have been shot at once. Meanwhile, you can take control of another Autobot and do battle with the Decepticons as a team.

During battles, your robots' ammunition and energy reserves are depleted and damage may well be inflicted by the attackers. Sending battle-worn defenders back to base allows them to be repaired and re-armed, but if too much damage has been sustained it may be impossible to repair an Autobot completely. Severe damage is indicated by a blank, grey screen when the View-screen is accessed. An overall status report on the current Autobot may be examined by pressing S while in View-screen mode, or by entering S followed by an indentifying number while the Map Screen is displayed.

The aim is to keep your own energy reserves as high as possible while preventing the invaders from stealing too much energy from key locations – such as an oil well, a pipeline, and a nuclear plant. Counters at the base of the main screen keep a tally of the energy reserves accumulated by the two sides in the conflict, and if the Decepticons get too great a lead the contest is lost, Earth is taken over by the evil invaders, and you can choose from a list of nine numbered hints before having another go.

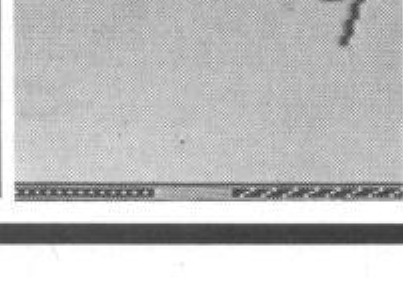
It's not just energy the Decepticons are after, however. Some of the locations contain items that prove very useful to them in the course of their fight for world domination – it's important to make sure that they don't get their metallic claws on some space dust found in the shuttle base. For instance – it comes in handy for creating giant, marauding hippos!

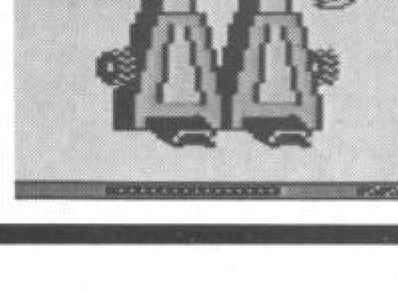


There's an impressive credits list on the inlay, and given the talents involved it's surprising that the end product isn't up to much. The sound and graphics are mediocre, and the game-play falls between the two stools of strategy and arcade action. The pace varies from slow on the map screen to cumbersome in the arcade sections. If you want an excellent toy tie-in, go for Zoids. Transformers **isn't very pretty, nor is it very compelling.**



If there's anything I hate the most about games it's waiting for minutes on end for something to happen. This happens recurringly with Transformers, **especially on the map screen where the action only happens once every two or three minutes. Then, when you consider the effort it takes to reach any of the destinations, on arriving the Decepticons fly around as such as speed that is quite impossible to hit them with the slow firing laser that is provided. The graphics are of a similar standard to the sound – poor and irritating, and no matter how long I played it I felt I was making no headway. Generally,** Transformers **is annoyingly dull and I advise you not to waste either effort or money on it.**





PRESENTATION 70%
Good instructions, and inspired in-game presentation which is awkwardly executed.

GRAPHICS 39%
Large, but not very detailed, colourful or remotely convincing.

SOUND 31%
Disjointed tune plays throughout and is rudely interrupted by simple spot effects.

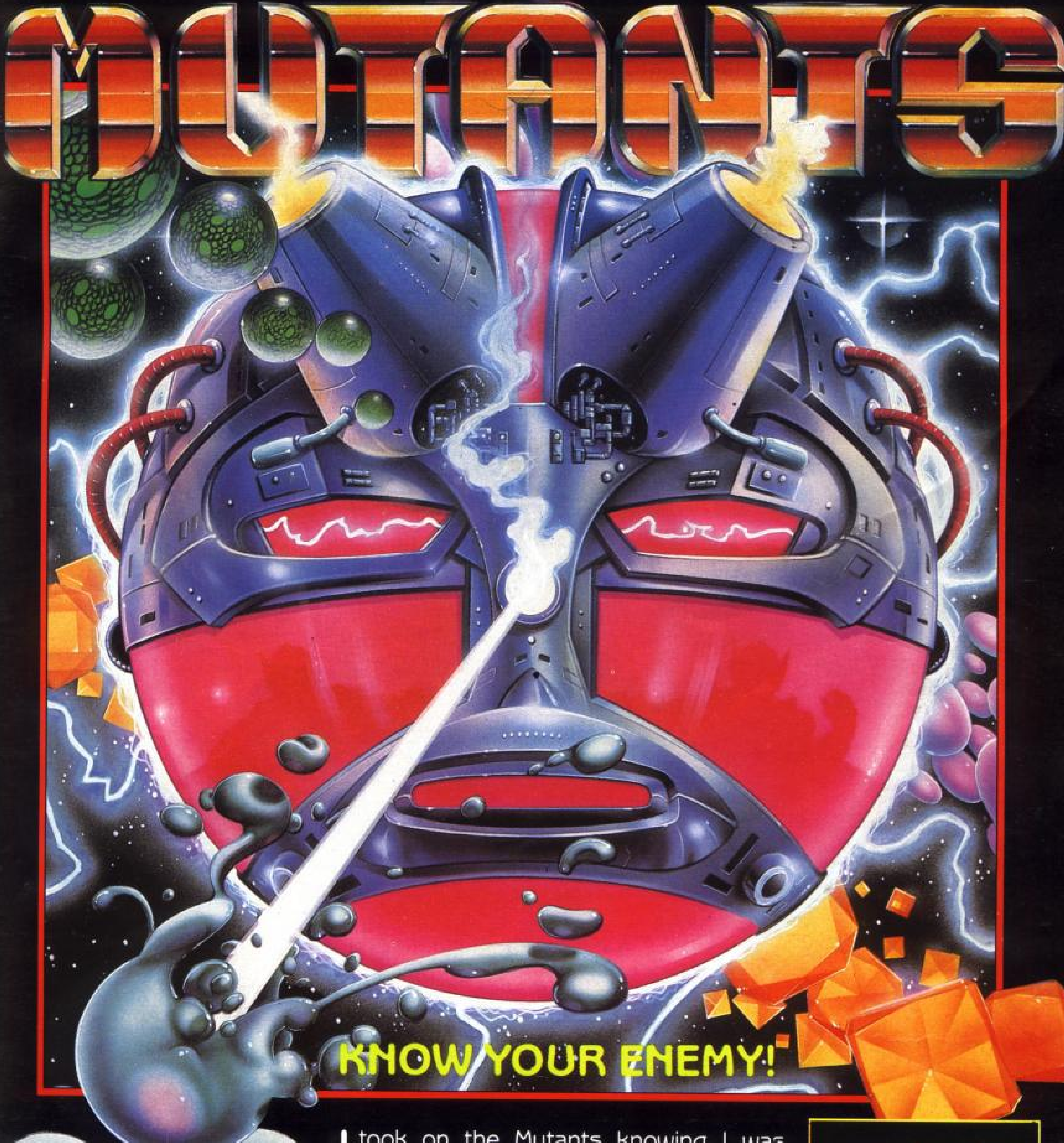
HOOKABILITY 54%
Slow, cumbersome and easily frustrating.

LASTABILITY 38%
Unrewarding and inelegant – not one to tempt you back.

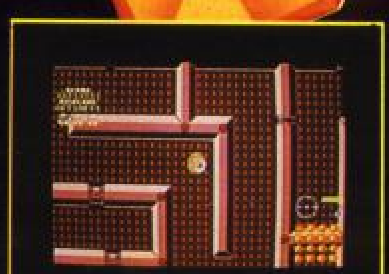
VALUE 32%
Ten quid is well out of order.

OVERALL 40%
A weak tie-in which bears little relevance to the toys – David Crane tries to do for *Transformers* what the Electronic Pencil Company did for *Zoids*. And it simply doesn't work.

BELIEVE ME...THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BEAT THE

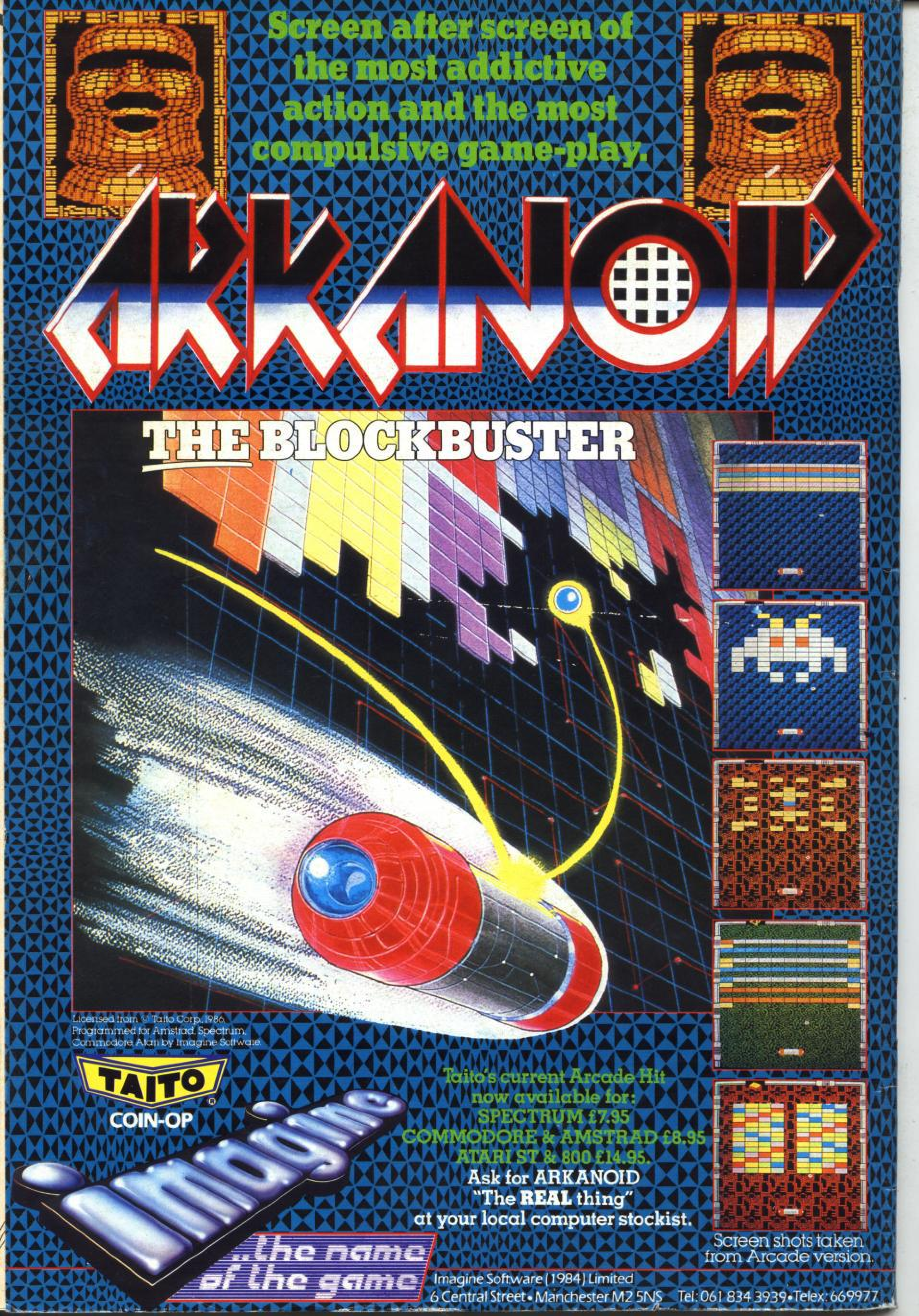


I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more... I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I loose? ...How DID I loose? I've never seen anything like it... they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning... but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all!





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Screen after screen of the most addictive action and the most compulsive game-play.
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